

IMAGES OF THE 70'S : 9 WASHINGTON ARTISTS

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MANON CLEARY

JOAN DANZIGER

REBECCA DAVENPORT

JENNIE LEA KNIGHT

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JANUARY 18 - MARCH 16, 1980

THE CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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PREFACE

Images of the 70's: 9 Washington Artists marks the start of what will be a new series of shows which examine, in a museum setting, the creative energy of Washington's artists. The position of curator for Washington art was created by the Corcoran Trustees in 1978, and, for this first year, the position was sponsored by the Friends of the Corcoran. These energetic, art-loving patrons have, thus, immeasurably helped the Corcoran to intensify its commitment to the local art scene.

Between the museum and the school, the Corcoran Gallery of Art is a mainstay for Washington's professional artists. It is a little known fact that in this present fiscal year more than one-half of the institution's operating budget goes to support Washington regional art, either through the museum or the school. In addition, the Corcoran has for decades regularly acquired prints, drawings, paintings, photographs, and sculpture by Washington artists.

The historical precedents for this community activity are rooted in the very beginnings of this institution. As early as 1873, the Corcoran Trustees noted that "Washington has special opportunities for men, or women, who may profit by . . . instruction and practice in the higher departments of drawing, design, painting and modelling." Even before the Corcoran School of Art was officially established in 1890, the museum was a gigantic classroom filled with Washington artists and would-be artists all copying the masterpieces on exhibition. In those times, copying

was a standard mode of teaching, and the Corcoran was so popular that casual visitors continually complained that so many artists had set up easels it was impossible to see the museum's permanent collection!

When the art school was opened in 1890, it served as a haven for regional artists; the museum's exhibition records from the late nineteenth century to the end of World War II provide an index of art activity in the area. Exhibitions of works from the Society of Washington Artists, Washington Architectural Club, Capital Camera Club, Washington Watercolor Club, and the Art School were mounted year after year, and they received strong support from the entire community. Attendance to these shows was high, and financial support appears to have been readily at hand.

In 1947, the Corcoran went a step further and established a biennial juried area show designed to serve as a talent search of Washington art. These exhibitions were suspended for a variety of reasons in the late 1960's. When resumed, their popularity and, more importantly, their necessity was clear. The response to the 1974 Area Show's announcement was overwhelming—over 3,300 entries in various media were received. Since that time, the gallery has decided to focus on one medium per exhibition. The next show, scheduled for the Fall of this year, will include works of art on paper, excluding photographs.

The museum and school of the Corcoran moved gradually from an early position of academic or utilitarian

art training and exhibiting toward an emphasis on high aesthetics. Between the two wars, the significant artists of the Washington region tended to work in various styles without organization or the rubric of a single movement. Then in the 1950's and 1960's there emerged an art of national and international importance. Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, Howard Meh-ring, Gene Davis, and others were known as the Washington Color School. They showed in groups and in individual exhibitions at the Corcoran. In short, they established Washington as a major art center, and their style has contributed to the development of post-modernist art throughout the world.

During the Color School's ascendancy another tradition of Washington art was steadily developing. For want of a better term, one might call it academic realism. This school or esthetic evolved into an increasingly eccentric and innovative manner. It is this contemporary realist phenomenon that the Corcoran's Clair List has decided to highlight. The message, as Mrs. List demonstrates in her introductory comments and in her interviews with each artist, is that Washington art is both more complex and more varied than is commonly understood.

We are especially pleased to present this first exhibition under the aegis of our new local curator. With this re-affirmed commitment, the Corcoran is ready to move into new fields which promise to be as rich and as full of surprises as those which yielded so much during the last three decades.

Peter C. Marzio
Director

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The assistance of numerous individuals has been invaluable to me during the preparation of this exhibition. I appreciate the warm cooperation of the various dealers, who so kindly opened up their storage rooms for me to explore: Diane Brown, Diane Brown Gallery; Barbara Fendrick, Fendrick Gallery; H. Marc Moyens, Gallery K; Harry Lunn, Lunn Gallery/Graphics International Ltd.; Chris Middendorf, Middendorf/Lane; Ramon Osuna, Osuna Gallery; Elinor Poindexter, Poindexter Gallery.

An exhibition of this type also relies heavily on the collaboration and assistance of the participating artists. I wish to thank all nine of them for their time, energy, patience and, most of all, for their kindness and trust.

I am deeply grateful to Peter C. Marzio, Director of the Corcoran Gallery of Art, for his enthusiastic and constant support; Jane Livingston, Associate Director, for her sage advice, committed involvement and encouragement; Marti Mayo, Coordinator of Exhibitions, for her countless answers to my many questions and her gracious aid; Pam Lawson, Secretary to the Associate Director, for typing much of the manuscript; Virginia Delfico, for ably assisting me in all phases of the exhibition and Klaus Preilipper, for his research assistance. I would also like to thank the following people, who were instrumental in the mounting and preparation of the show: Shelby White Cave, Associate Registrar; Tony Blazys and Einar Gomo. A special thanks goes to Joel Breger for his superb photographic contributions.

Finally, let me express my appreciation to the lenders for their willingness to part with their works for this period of time; I am immeasurably indebted to them.
C.L.

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INTRODUCTION

It has been consistently and repeatedly stated that the 1970's, unlike the 1950's and 1960's, was a period devoid of overriding art movements. Instead, during this era of restlessness and cultivation, artists have experimented with the various aesthetics developed over the previous two decades and incorporated this immense vocabulary into intensely personal statements. Artists have sifted and culled from Abstract Expressionism, Pop Art, Minimal Art and Photo Realism certain other styles which they have then applied to their own interpretive visions. The nine artists represented in this exhibition are not exceptions to this tendency.

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the exploration in this decade is the resurgence of representational art. The Washington art community has always had a strong tradition of representational art, even though it was pushed aside and nearly forgotten in the 1960's with the domination of abstract art in general and the Washington Color School in particular. In the fifties and sixties, such masters as Sarah Baker, Peter De-Anna, Robert Gates, Jacob Kainen, Pietro Lazzari and Ben Summerford were in the forefront. Their academic training and approach had and still has a growing and pervasive influence on the work of realist artists of the local area.

Extremely divergent styles and subject matter have evolved from this solid foundation. These range from psychologically derived and whimsical forms reminiscent of Surrealism and resulting from hallucinogenic and subconsciously evoked images; works which border on the abstract in their simplified and precise formats; energetic, expressive reactions to the contemporary social and political scene; and, of course, the slightly more academic and traditional prototypes.

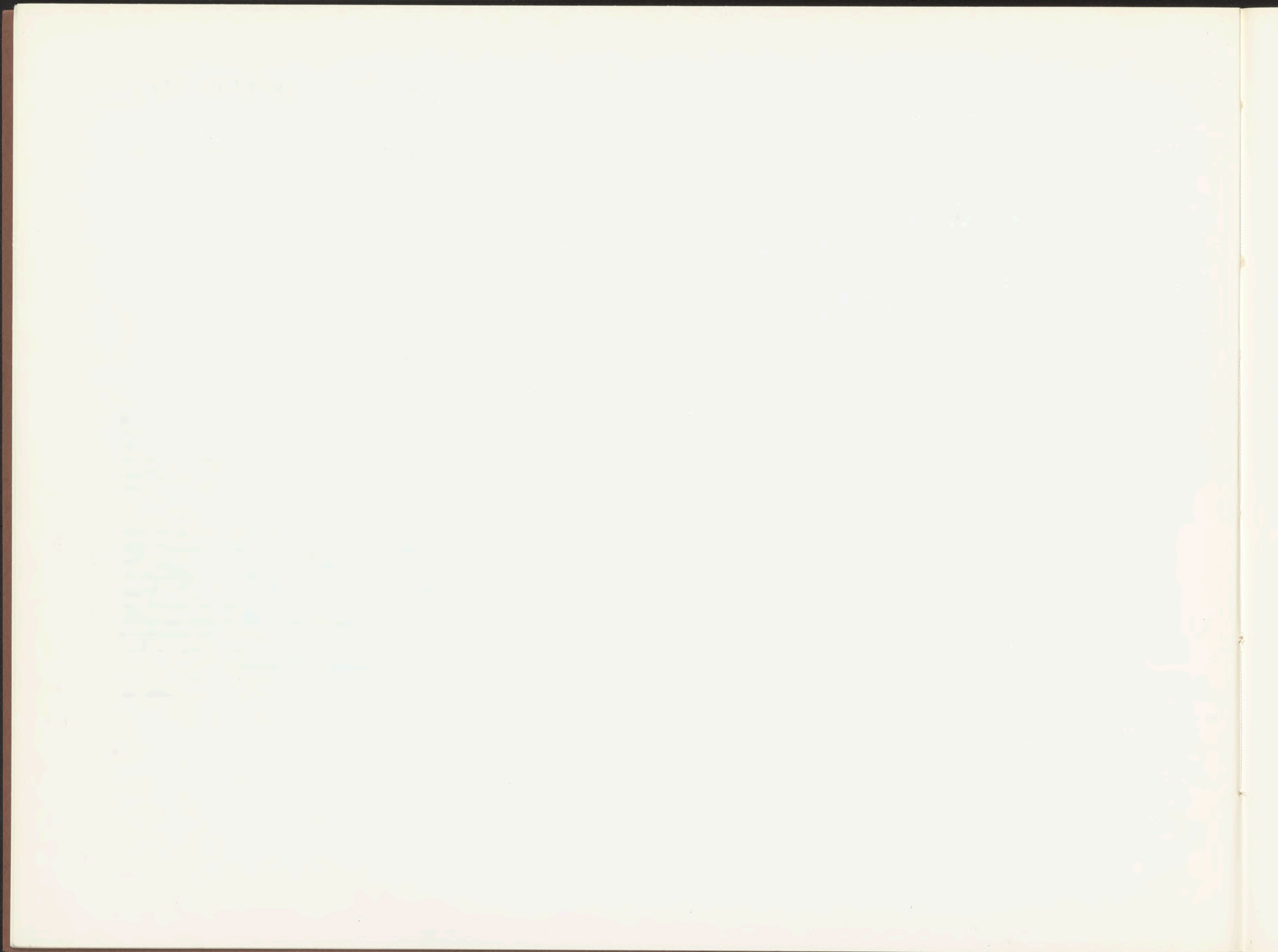
Images of the 70's: 9 Washington Artists reflects both the wide variety of approaches to realism and the considerable talent and high quality in the Washington region today.

It is this innovative and versatile second generation, the offshoot of the above-mentioned "academic realists," that I have chosen to highlight in this survey of the last ten years. I believe that all of these artists attained their mature style during the past decade as they updated and personalized the representational mode to suit their needs. Rather than reinterpret their interests and temperaments in an introductory statement, I have conducted extensive interviews with them to show how their life experiences have affected their art.

In selecting the artists, I tried to assemble the highest quality in as great a range as possible—be it in age group, intention, format, medium, technique, subject matter. Of course, the list of artists working with realist imagery is virtually endless; I have limited the exhibition to only nine in order to present as thorough a look as possible into each individual's interpretation and history.

It is instructive and perhaps surprising to observe how many different styles can be grouped under one generalized heading. Such presentation in a group context should not, however, diminish the significant individual contributions of each artist. I also do not wish to propose that representational art was the major or dominant movement in Washington during the 1970's; it was merely one of several modes. In fact, one cannot yet target the impact on the eighties of these lingering and tantalizing perceptions.

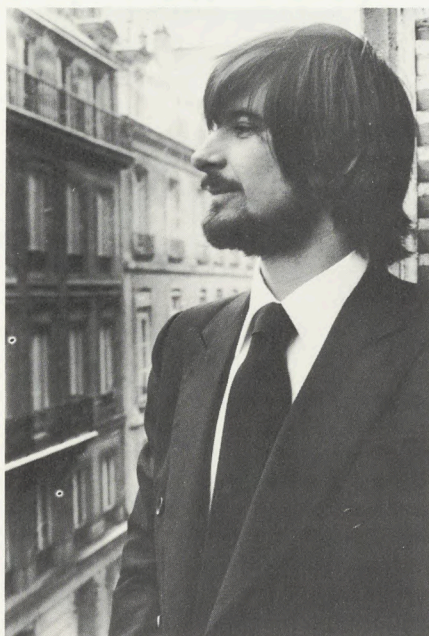
Clair List



IMAGES OF THE 70'S:
9 WASHINGTON ARTISTS



MICHAEL CLARK



Born Denver, Colorado, November 20, 1946.
 Moved to Washington, D.C., 1959.
 Studied Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York, 1965-1966.
 Returned to Washington, D.C., 1966.
 Studied Corcoran School of Art, 1967-1968.
 Received Ford Foundation Grant, 1968-1969.

SELECTED INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS

Washington, D.C., Jefferson Place Gallery, 1968.
 Washington, D.C., ACE Company, 1970.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, April 30-June 6, 1971.
 Washington, D.C., Pyramid Galleries Ltd., 1971.
 Washington, D.C., Lunn Gallery/Graphics International Ltd., February 3-March 7, 1973.
 Syracuse, New York, Everson Museum of Art, December 15, 1973-January 13, 1974.
 New York City, Andrew Crispo Gallery, January 16-February 2, 1974.
 Washington, D.C., Lunn Gallery/Graphics International Ltd., February 3-February 28, 1975.
 New York City, Andrew Crispo Gallery, February 10-March 2, 1977.
 Washington, D.C., Lunn Gallery/Graphics International Ltd., November 5-December 3, 1977.
 Corpus Christi, Texas, Art Museum of South Texas, June 1-July 4, 1978.
 Dallas, Texas, Delahunty Gallery, April 11-May 4, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Lunn Gallery/Graphics International Ltd., May 24-June 29, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., The Dimock Gallery, George Washington University, May 24-June 29, 1979.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Washington, D.C., Jewish Community Center, "Eight Young Washington Painters," 1967.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "18th Area Exhibition," November 18-December 31, 1967.
 Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution, "The Art of Organic Forms," June 15-July 31, 1968.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "Washington 1968, New Painting: Structure," September 27-November 3, 1968.
 Sarasota, Florida, Ringling Museum of Art, "Washington Painters," December 1-December 28, 1969. Traveled to: Jacksonville, Florida, Museum of Art.
 Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, "New York Drawing Society Show," 1970. Traveled to: Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "The Drawing Society National Exhibition," September 25-November 1, 1970.

Edmonton, Canada, Edmonton Art Gallery, "Ten Washington Artists: 1950-1970," February 5-March 8, 1970.
 Baltimore, Maryland, The Baltimore Museum of Art, "Washington: Twenty Years," May 12-June 21, 1970.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "Seven Washington Artists," July-August 1971.
 Guatemala City, Guatemala, Instituto Guatemalteco Americano, "Dibujos, Washington: 1972," July 6-August 31, 1972.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "Seven Young Artists: Works On Paper," August 1-September 15, 1972.
 Washington, D.C., Pyramid Galleries Ltd., "Realists," November 1972.
 New York City, Andrew Crispo Gallery, "Twentieth Century Americans," January 16-February 2, 1973.
 Potsdam, New York, Brainerd Hall, State University College, at Potsdam, "The Presence and Absence in Realism," March 26-April 30, 1976.
 Washington, D.C., The Dimock Gallery, George Washington University, "George Washington—Big Man on Campus," June 15-July 15, 1976.
 New York City, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, "Rooms P.S.1," 1976.
 Bridgeport, Connecticut, Carlson Gallery, University of Bridgeport, "A View: The Figure in Drawing 1970's," January 13-February 15, 1977.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "35th Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary American Painting," February 26-April 3, 1977.
 Ann Arbor, Michigan, University of Michigan Museum of Art, "Works from the Collection of Dorothy and Herbert Vogel," November 11, 1977-January 1, 1978.
 Utica, New York, Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, "Critics' Choice," January 8-January 29, 1978.
 Miami, Florida, Miami-Dade Community College, "Five Washington Artists," February 13-March 2, 1978.
 St. Petersburg, Florida, Museum of Fine Arts, "Five Washington Artists," May 27-June 25, 1978.
 Washington, D.C., Museum of Temporary Art, "36 Hours," December 7-December 22, 1978.
 New York City, Institute for Art and Urban Resources, "Postcard Art," 1978.
 Washington, D.C. Corcoran Gallery of Art, "Washington Art on Paper: 1962-1978," January 23-March 18, 1979.

CLAIR LIST: When did you become interested in art?

MICHAEL CLARK: I started my art career in 1953 in Houston at the age of seven. There was a creative streak in the family as my father was a photographer.

CL: Did he teach you how to use the camera?

MC: I was his gofer so I learned by watching him. He began as an Air Force photographer and then worked for the government as an agricultural photographer. I remember that once he sent for a book on how to be an artist—he took the course for a year or two and just quit. He gave the book to my brother, Mark, and me, and we began to copy out of it. Also, when I was about six, and Mark was five, we would go out to the back yard in Texas and draw all day long. We eventually accumulated a large stack of pictures, and we decided to go door-to-door and sell them. We made a nice sum of money. So as far back as I can remember, art—painting and drawing—has been a way of life with me.

CL: As a child, did you move from city to city with your parents?

MC: Yes, from Houston we moved around the state of Texas and then on to Honolulu. We finally settled in Corpus Christi, Texas, which is on the ocean. That city has had a great influence on my work as I constantly revert back to it for subject matter. In fact, I often use my childhood memories as an impetus for my imagery.

CL: Did your years in Corpus Christi suggest your recent seascape theme?

MC: Yes, the city and my time there inspired those canvases. I like Corpus Christi because of its romantic aura. Sunsets, palm trees and a sensuous rich surface are devices I use in order to convey this feeling to the viewer. These canvases, as with my others, recount my lingering memories of certain times and places.

CL: They seem to be happy memories; they are very pleasant paintings.

MC: Yes, they are happy memories. Even the cars revert back to my childhood—the first car that my family owned, when we lived in Honolulu, was quite similar to my painting, *1938 Chevrolet*.

CL: Did you paint the canvas from a photograph

of your car that perhaps your father had taken?

MC: No, I didn't. One day I was walking down a street in Georgetown, and I saw that car; the angle and the light were just perfect. The scene reminded me of something from my youth in the early fifties and I knew I had to capture it on canvas. I simply lined up the camera and took several photographs. In a way, I almost do my paintings in the camera; I can edit all of the elements in my mind. I only use the photograph in order to get all of the lines in the right place.

CL: Do you take a photograph for each canvas?

MC: I take several slides, photographs of the site, and I use my mind to put them together for the actual canvas. Yet, I do not consider myself a Photo Realist because I add a dramatic and often a romantic element. I also eliminate any of the irrelevant images.

CL: What's romantic about George Washington?

MC: That theme goes back to when I was a kid in school. Teachers were always threatening to flunk me because I either daydreamed in class or I just drew all day long. Before lunchtime I would do drawings of George Washington that I copied from the dollar bill. In the early 1970's, people were pushing me towards portraiture, yet I was unsure of the technique. I decided to practice by copying George Washington's face—an honest face, a man of integrity. I decided that no matter who else posed for me I could always reflect a truthfulness, a forthrightness in them.

CL: How did you begin painting George?

MC: I started them in Washington, D.C., in the early 1970's. I began the George Washington series by painting on museum postcards of his various portraits. I got very tired of that as I was painting on so many of them so I decided to go down to the National Gallery and copy from the original portraits. I then had my own postcards made.

CL: Were you influenced by Pop Art in any way?

MC: No, this is totally different from Pop Art.

CL: In what way?

MC: The paintings took a lot of time and effort to do, and I consider them propaganda paintings.

Unlike Pop Art, they were never meant to be sarcastic, ironic or humorous. They do not make fun of anyone or anything. Instead, they are to be taken quite seriously.

CL: In what way are they serious paintings?

MC: On two levels—I was inspired to do them by the Vietnam War. I wanted to portray a war hero, a man of integrity—and I settled on George Washington. He is still considered our greatest President, and he is a classic subject. Secondly, I wanted to convey various moods and expressions using the same form and image over and over. Many of my close friends have always thought that they were sublimated self-portraits, that the expressions were those I tend to assume. I have never done any self-portraits so I don't know if I accept that.

CL: When did you move to Washington?

MC: About 1960 when my father was offered a job with the Department of Agriculture. Right after we moved, I found the National Gallery, and I began to spend hours there copying works—Piero della Francesca to the Impressionists to Cezanne, Seurat and Picasso. I have always flipped over Picasso—especially his later work. I tried to copy him, but it became almost impossible; the works are so personal, they are like a signature, and everything was lost in translation.

CL: Did you borrow the technique of dots of color from the Pointillist, Georges Seurat?

MC: Perhaps subconsciously, but I feel the dots surfaced naturally.

CL: What do you mean?

MC: Of all the different modes of painting that I studied, the dots felt the best, they felt right to me. But my paintings go beyond the dots—I use them only as a printing technique. I feel my canvases are more similar to Oriental art in my concentration on flat planes and formality. It is a totally idealized rendition. I feel Oriental art has more to do with perfection than anything else.

CL: When did you begin to paint abstractly?

MC: I spent one year in New York in 1965-66, and I was on the fringes of many different scenes. I never joined any group as I am a loner; I

merely observed all that was happening. Then I returned to Washington, and I took a class at the Corcoran School with William Woodward. I didn't accomplish very much in the class, but I felt Woodward was a real inspiration.

CL: What do you mean?

MC: His philosophy was that you ought to paint no matter what was on your mind; you should just go through the gesture. So I kept going.

CL: Aside from the artists you were copying at the National Gallery, were there others who were influential?

MC: The Washington Color School—in particular, Tom Downing, Gene Davis, Morris Louis—had a great influence on my artistic development in the 1960's. I also always liked those early shaped Richard Smiths and, of course, Frank Stella's work. I liked the way he cut out the unnecessary and threw it away. During the late 1960's, I pursued abstract shaped canvases, and my shapes were round; it was something I figured out by myself. Even Tom Downing wasn't doing shaped paintings at that time, and he was really curious. He came over and saw my work once and couldn't believe what I was actually doing. It was no big deal—anybody could have made them, yet I couldn't understand why Downing hadn't figured out this concept. Gradually, I grew tired and bored with the Washington Color School; it became dull and uninteresting, as it began to lose its meaning for me. I was worried about getting stuck in an already established groove—so I whipped right through it.

CL: What type of work were you next interested in trying?

MC: I stopped the shaped abstracts, and I began to concentrate on architectural motifs. When I was younger, I constantly drew houses, office buildings, windows—a whole range. I have always loved depicting architecture because it stands still, it is a permanent model, yet it is a complex subject because you have to deal with light, weather conditions and the human element—types and positions of shades, curtains, etc. I returned to the window motifs in 1967. In my many window categories, I am

searching for the perfect form and a perfect vehicle for my color. This is quite similar to Morris Louis' and Kenneth Noland's technique in that it is very difficult for someone else to emulate. All of this took years to evolve.

CL: How did you decide to turn to a representational subject matter?

MC: As I said, I became restless with the abstract. At that time, I was in touch with Jacob Kainen—his studio was next to mine in the Le Droite building. Kainen was just finishing his figurative period and our talks led me to try it. I decided to explore the possibilities of this new motif. Also, I saw all of the Kenneth Clark *Civilization* films at the National Gallery, and the humanistic nature of both Clark and Kainen really appealed to me at that moment.

CL: Will you continue with the windows? Would it be difficult for you not to paint them?

MC: Yes, it would. I keep drawing and painting them; I can't stop.

CL: Do you feel that same passion for the seascapes?

MC: Yes, the same. Actually they're all the same motivation.

CL: Do you have the desire to paint another George Washington at this point?

MC: Let me be honest—there is always the temptation.

CL: So at the same time that you're searching for new forms, you are constantly going back to the old ones and experimenting?

MC: Yes. My newest attempt is still life; I have borrowed many of the images from Picasso.

CL: Tell me about *Blue Nude*.

MC: What happened with the nudes is that when I studied anatomy by myself I used to sit around with the book and copy from it. I drew all the muscles, all the bones, etc. and, even when I was doing the abstract paintings, I always continued my anatomy drawings. I'd often trace faces out of *Vogue* magazine, then I'd throw them away. I was always interested in the nudes due to their round shapes; that's also what attracted me to cars. I slightly exaggerated the forms of the *Blue Nude*, but that's on purpose. I can draw with my eyes closed; it has

always been easy for me to do figures—I like doing them. One of the problems with this painting is that I started it a couple of years ago, and never finished it. I didn't have the technique to really do what I wanted with it—I wanted to get more sensuousness into the paint.

CL: When you were working in Washington, did you ever seriously study work being done by Robert Gates, Ben Summerford, Peter DeAnna, etc.?

MC: I knew Gates a little bit, and I had seen Summerford's work at the Jefferson Place Gallery. But it was very difficult to get close to them. I always felt very sorry for them because they got shot down. If you weren't staining or using some type of masking tape or large rollers, the sentiment was—get out of town by sunset. I hate doctrines that state there is only one way to paint.

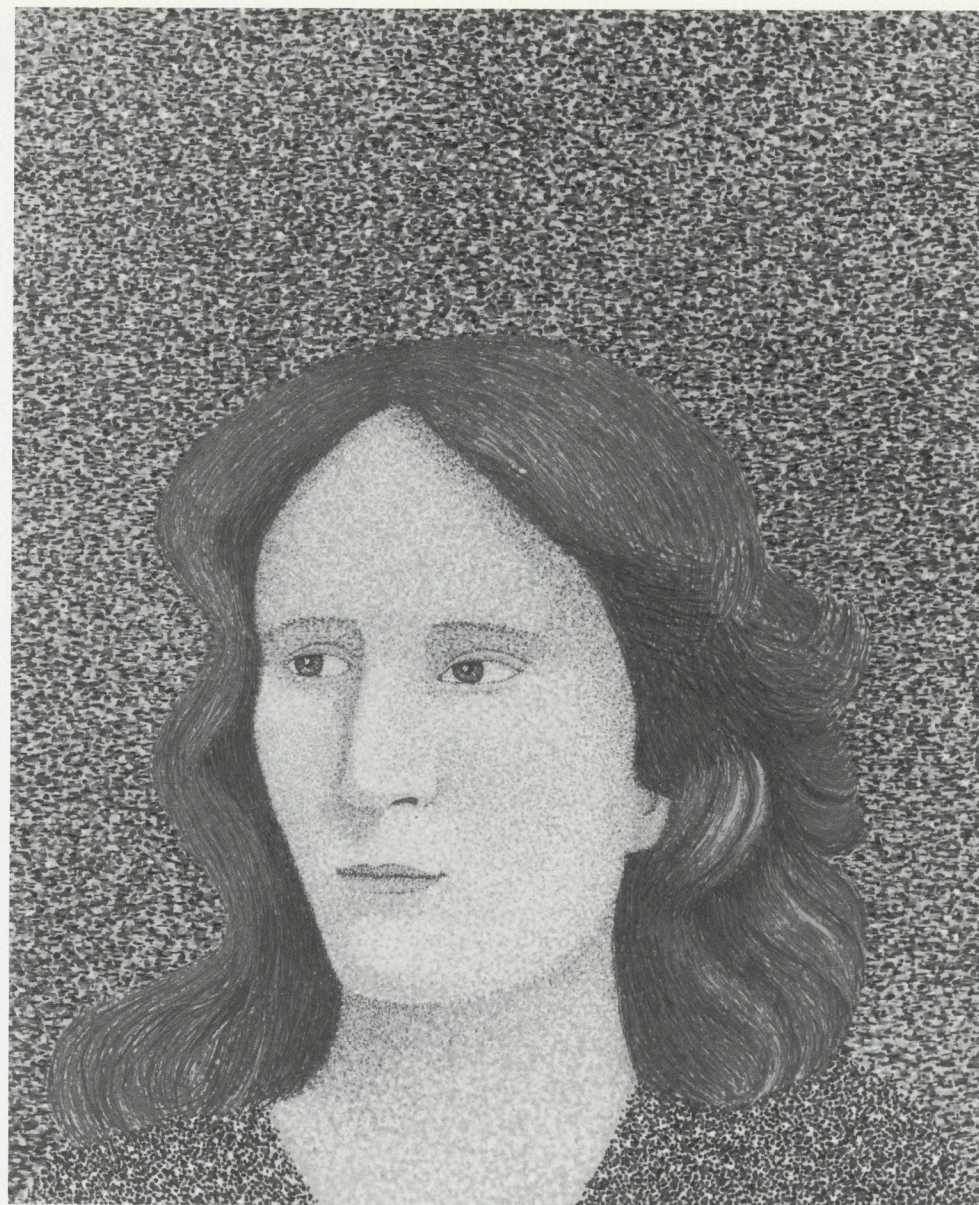
CL: Did these figurative painters ever give you the incentive to continue your work?

MC: No, not those painters. However, as I already stated, Jacob Kainen did. They had been worked over mercilessly by the press in Washington; they were considered totally out of it. Gates is a particularly sad case because he was really good, and he was scorned. Mitchell Jamieson was another much abused artist. He had a great show at The Dimock Gallery, George Washington University, that received a fairly good review. The works were composed of the atrocities of the Vietnam War; they were extremely powerful yet everybody thought he was crazy. If it wasn't a color painting, nobody wanted to see it. I went and saw the show and thought it was terrific. What a waste!

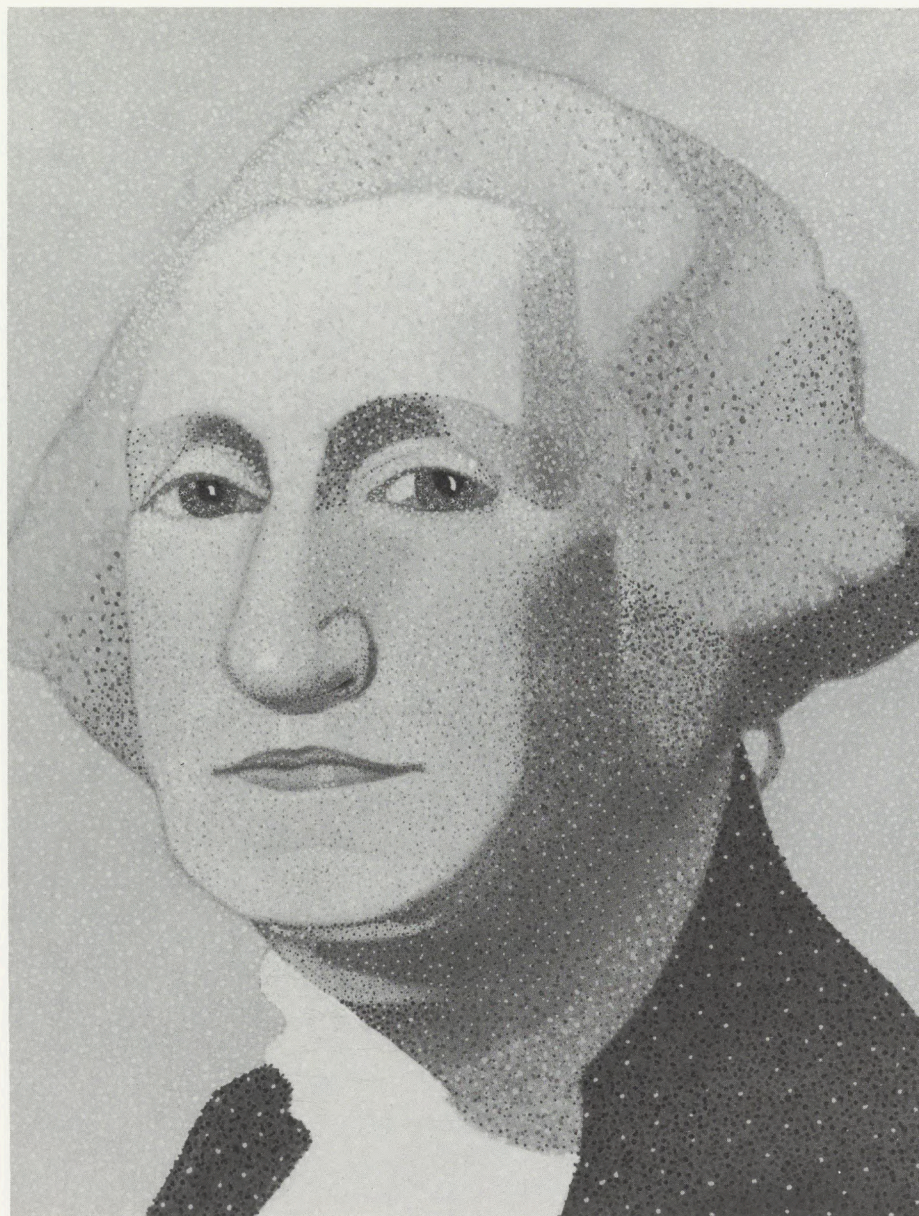
CL: Do you work on one piece, study it for a while and then begin something else?

MC: Yes. I can't see doing assembly line work. Some of the painterly effects that I want to convey can't be attained without spending a couple of months working on them. It is very rare that I can quickly finish a piece and be happy with it.

CL: Do you always make small sketches for your larger canvases?



3. Michael Clark
Lila. 1973
Collection Mary Swift



5. Michael Clark
Light Blue George Washington. 1974
 Collection the artist

- MC: I used to quite often, but not so much any more. Now I just start the painting process at once. If I'm doing a portrait I'll carry a photograph of that individual with me, and I'll hang around with him, study him, etc. Actually, I go through the same procedure with most of my paintings, that is, I'll carry a photograph of the seascape, automobile, etc., around with me. I'll take it out at times and just stare at it.
- CL: Do you first draw an outline of the image on the canvas with pencil, or do you just start painting?
- MC: No, I have to get the lines and form correctly, so first I grid the canvas. I've always struggled with the concept of where the form begins and the color leaves off or vice versa. I tend to take the form for granted, and that's why I don't just sketch it out, why I use a photograph. To me the color is the most important aspect of the painting.
- CL: When you switched from abstraction to the figurative work, what were your friends saying? What were the other artists you were associating with saying to you?
- MC: No one has ever had too much of an influence as far as my own artistic development has gone. I always take criticism or applause lightly because I can never figure out whether critics and viewers actually understand what I am doing.
- CL: Do you need reinforcement?
- MC: Well, it is good for sales; you have to get great reviews in Washington to make sales. Washington is a peculiar phenomenon. A lot of people criticize me for talking about the art market—there's always this holier than thou attitude. But I have always looked at Washington as being similar to Milan; New York being like Rome; Chicago could be Florence; and Los Angeles could be Genoa. As was true in the Renaissance in Italy, there are different art centers and different styles and languages. You have to think in terms of the market and what it desires, and try to make a living. Most people say, "How can you talk about the money?" but I've got to eat, too. Since I want to spend all my time working on artistic pursuits, I want a situation in which I can survive. When I left Washington,

I left not so much for financial reasons but because the city was all tied up in a provincial atmosphere. One example—before Mitchell Jamieson committed suicide, I was in a project in which he also participated. I wanted to go and talk to him, yet I didn't even get an introduction; we were in the same room, and I couldn't meet him. He didn't want to know anybody from the new school because he'd been overlooked. He had so much to offer us, and I couldn't even meet him. So I thought I would go to New York and see if I could earn a little respect through living there.

CL: Do you mean with the idea that eventually you would return to Washington?

MC: Yes, definitely. I feel I am a Washingtonian—my situation is similar to a Senator or Representative. They live in Washington yet they consider themselves citizens of their own states. Washington has always been my real home.

CL: Do you feel that you're working in isolation in New York?

MC: I work practically in total isolation there. I have a few people that I talk to, but I get hostility wherever I go. My colleagues give me a hard time because of my stands on art.

CL: Why are you living in New York, Michael, if it's such a hostile environment? Why aren't you in Washington where your work is accepted?

MC: I spend a lot of time on the road. I used to go to California every year. Now I go to France every year, and I go to Texas every year. I break it down like this: I spend about three to four weeks in Paris, a month to a month and a half in Texas, a month and a half to two months in Washington, and the rest of the year I spend in New York.

CL: Do you work when you travel?

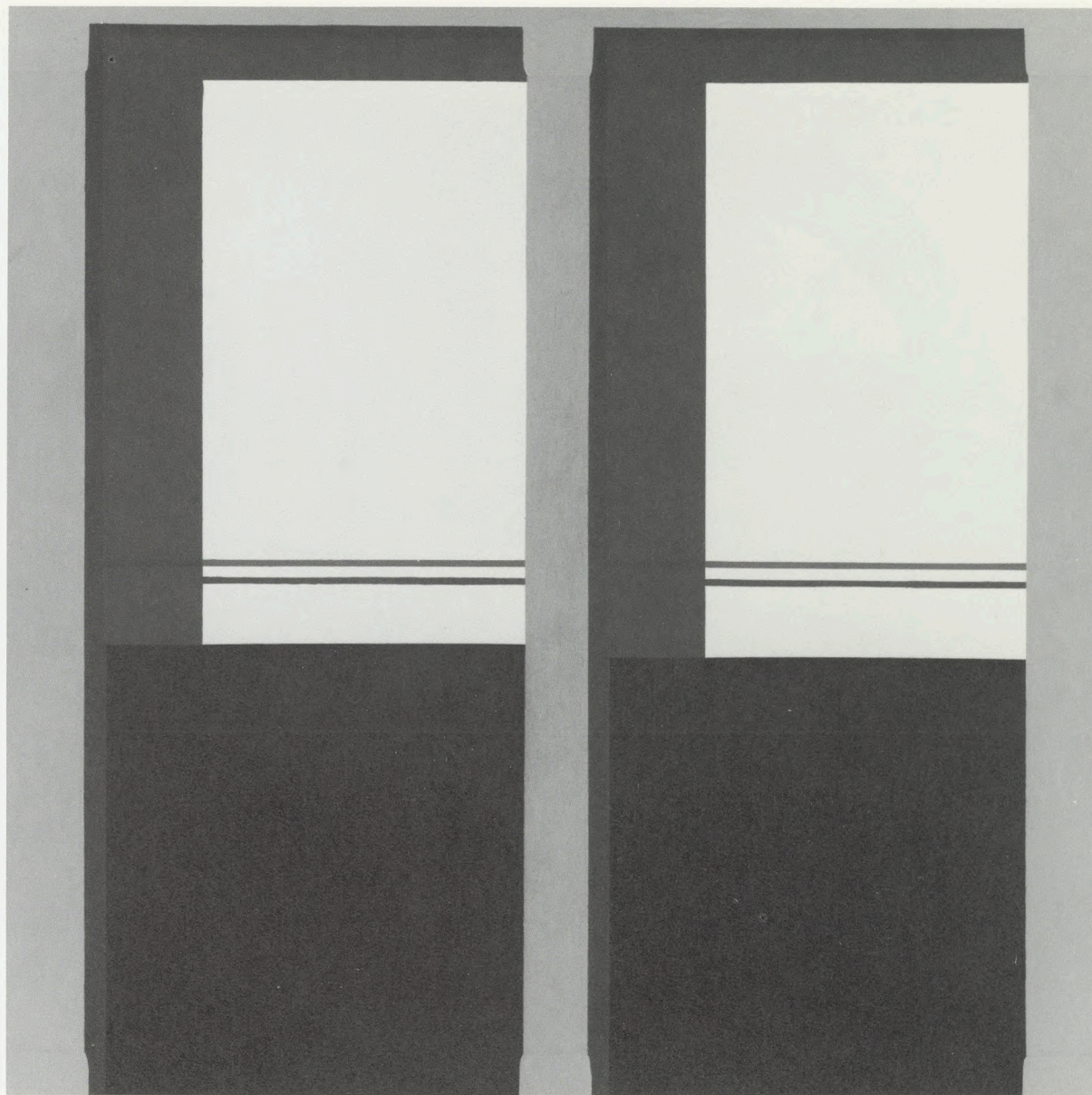
MC: Yes, I paint and draw everywhere.

CL: How many pieces do you work on at a time?

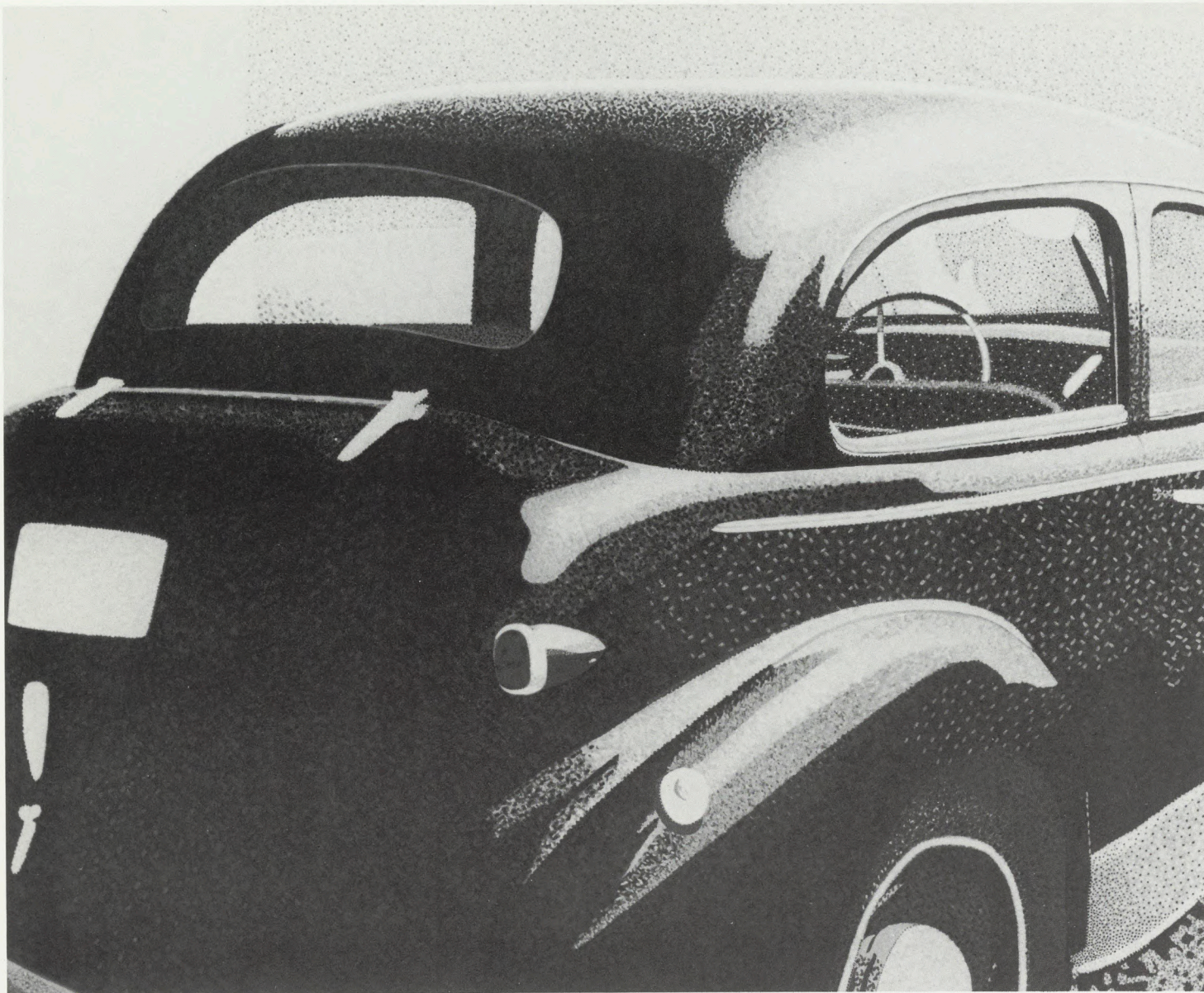
MC: Sometimes up to ten works.

CL: Michael, for whom do you paint?

MC: I have to admit that I paint for a public; I love to show my work. I'm not stupid enough to really believe the argument that you just paint for yourself. Most critics refer to my work as either Pop or Photo Realist—it isn't. They have



7. Michael Clark
Los Angeles Window without Curtains. 1976
Private collection



10. Michael Clark
1938 Chevrolet. 1977-1978
Collection the artist

never grasped the time and effort that goes into a canvas. I don't know, I just think you have to do your own thing and whether or not the people go for it, you have to roll with the punches. I could make a lot of easier paintings of which people would say, "That would go right in the dining room," and I could rip them off. But in Washington it takes Harry Lunn sometimes three or four years to sell some of my pictures because they're just not that easy. Perhaps if I added more rose or pastel color or something like that I could sell many, but they're too tough for most people. They can't relate to them; yet I stick to my guns.

CL: How do you feel about the Washington art scene?

MC: I don't think you can turn your back on New York the way a lot of people in Washington have. It's a foolish thing because New York is still where it's happening. The resources are in New York; Washington still has this Southern cow-town atmosphere. All of the collectors are so conservative; they poo-poo everything. The art scene in a way is just one big cocktail party, and that bothers me a lot. I mean it's the same faces in the last ten years, and the same people jockeying for the same few spots. In a way New York has its drawbacks because it's so high-pressured. Unless you have the critics and the museums and some big dealers behind you, you are going to be living an isolated life. And until you realize all of that, you're going to have a tough time.

CL: Are you frustrated?

MC: No, I'm not wringing my hands because I don't have the critics beating down my door. I have missed out on many museum exhibitions, but when it comes down to the bottom line, that doesn't bother me. I think I have been lucky enough—I can support myself, I'm getting by, and all my time is my time. I'm free to go to the museums, galleries, whenever I wish and to paint whenever I want. What more could you ask for?

MANON CLEARY



Born St. Louis, Missouri, November 14, 1942.
 Studied Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri; B.F.A., 1964.
 Taught St. Louis County Public Schools, St. Louis, Missouri, 1964-1966.
 Studied University of Valencia, Valencia, Spain, Summer 1965.
 Studied Tyler School of Art of Temple University, Rome, Italy, 1966-1967.
 Studied Tyler School of Art of Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; M.F.A., 1968.
 Taught State University College of New York at Oswego, 1968-1970.
 Moved to Washington, D.C., 1970.
 Associate Professor, University of the District of Columbia, 1970-present.

SELECTED INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS

Philadelphia, Tyler Gallery, Summer 1968.
 Washington, D.C., Franz Bader Gallery, January 26-February 12, 1972.
 Washington, D.C., Arena Stage, Spring 1972.
 Washington, D.C., Pyramid Galleries Ltd., May 21-June 15, 1974.
 Washington, D.C., Pyramid Galleries Ltd., April 26-May 21, 1977.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Rockville, Maryland, Goldman Fine Arts Gallery, "New Directions in Painting," 1971.
 Guatemala City, Guatemala, Instituto Guatemalteco Americano, "Dibujos, Washington: 1972," July 6-August 31, 1972.
 Washington, D.C., Pyramid Galleries Ltd., "Summer at Pyramid," Summer 1972-1978.
 Washington, D.C., Pyramid Galleries Ltd., "Beverly Court Show," January 9-January 31, 1973.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "Appel, Cleary, Moeller," June-August, 1973.
 University Park, Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State University, "Living American Artists and the Figure," November 2-December 22, 1974.
 Washington, D.C., Pyramid Galleries, Ltd., "Recent Works by 12 Women Artists," February 9-March 10, 1975.
 Philadelphia, Moore College of Art, "North, East, West, South, and Middle," February 28-April 4, 1975. Traveled to: New York City, Pratt Graphics Center, April 29-May 31, 1975; Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, November 15, 1975-February 8, 1976; Fort Worth, Texas, Fort Worth Art Museum, April 17-June 13, 1976; La Jolla, California, La Jolla Museum of Contemporary Art, July 31-September 12, 1976.

Philadelphia, Marian Locks Gallery, "Washington in Philadelphia," January 10-January 31, 1976.
 Miami, Florida, Miami Art Center, Inc., "Contemporary American Painters," February 15-March 24, 1976.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "American Drawings from the Private Collections of Friends of the Corcoran," March 20-April 11, 1976.
 Aarhus, Denmark, Aarhus Kunstmuseum, "The Liberation: 14 American Artists," a U.S.I.A. exhibition traveling throughout Europe, April 1976-November 1977.
 San Diego, California, Fine Arts Gallery of San Diego, "Invitational American Drawing Exhibition," September 17-October 30, 1977.
 New York City, Harold Reed Gallery, "Selected 20th Century Nudes," February 16-March 4, 1978.
 Denver, Colorado, Sebastian-Moore Gallery, "Hue and Image," June 6-July 10, 1978.
 Washington, D.C., Middendorf/Lane, "Washington Realists," September 10-October 20, 1978.
 Bethesda, Maryland, White Flint Mall, Government Services S & L, "Towards a New Portraiture," September 20-December 11, 1978.
 New York City, Chuck Levitan Gallery, "Works on Paper," September 30-October 28, 1978.
 Washington, D.C., Osuna Gallery, "Fifteen Artists," January 30-February 22, 1979.
 Philadelphia, A. J. Wood Galleries, "Manon Cleary and Lowell Nesbitt," April 21-May 16, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Osuna Gallery, "Summer at Osuna," July 10-August 17, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Middendorf/Lane, "Small Works," September 11-September 29, 1979.

CLAIR LIST: Where were you born?

MANON CLEARY: I was born in St. Louis, in 1942, with my identical twin, Shirley. She lives in Montana and is an artist as well.

CL: Does she paint, draw or sculpt?

MC: None of the above, she makes prints. We decided that we didn't want to compete any more, so she took up printmaking as I abhor it.

CL: Tell me about the competition.

MC: Competition is inevitable if you're twins. Mother dressed us alike until we were nineteen, which we really should have complained about long before then. It got us a lot of favorable attention as well as a lot of unfavorable attention; it certainly marked our early childhood. It made us anticipate attention from merely existing, which is a bad way to grow up. It also made us very, very competitive with one another because I think, subconsciously, we were trying to maintain our individuality, although we didn't realize that we were separate people until we were in our twenties.

CL: I'm sure that was difficult.

MC: I always assumed that Shirley thought exactly as I did. I got outraged when she behaved in a way that was not according to a prescribed plan, because it seemed irrational, because it wasn't what I would have done.

CL: Did you take the same classes in school?

MC: All the way through college and into graduate school.

CL: Did you date the same men?

MC: No, we always had one place where we maintained our individuality. She was always attracted to large, heavy-set copies of my father. And I was always attracted to light, feminine copies of my Uncle Daniel.

CL: When you were younger, did your parents enroll you in art school?

MC: No, in the Midwest there weren't many programs. We did little things at the art museum, and we majored in art in high school. Art was always an escape for me. My father was a doctor and as a general practitioner he managed to bring home, over an eighteen year period, most of the epidemics in St. Louis. When I was a very young child, I spent a great deal of time

sick in bed, and whenever I would get something my twin sister would get it or vice versa. Therefore we would be out of school for a month or so at a time, and art was something to keep us quiet. I think that probably contributed to my imagery; it tends a little more towards the subconscious. I spent a lot of time within myself when I was younger as opposed to being around other children.

CL: Did you stay in St. Louis through graduate school?

MC: Just through undergraduate school. I then had this great liberating experience—I applied to graduate school in June after all the admissions were closed. One of the schools said that their regular classes were full but that they were starting a new school in Italy and would I be interested? It seemed like the most perfect escape from my preceding twenty years. I did my first year of graduate work in Italy, and then I traveled back to Philadelphia for the second year. That one year in Rome was the growing up process I should have gone through five years earlier. It was also the first time that I started to think about making art that had something to do with me as opposed to just a continuation of classroom assignments.

CL: What kinds of things were you painting and drawing?

MC: Before I went to Rome, I was doing commissioned portraits and still lifes. I had never been particularly interested in making my own abstract images. The undergraduate school that I attended was quite academic.

CL: Which school was that?

MC: Washington University in St. Louis. They taught you how to draw and how to paint, but they didn't care very much what you painted or drew.

CL: It must have been helpful to learn these techniques.

MC: Yes, I appreciated it when I got to graduate school, where the emphasis was upon personal imagery. Many of my classmates, who hadn't had such a strong background, were full of images but incapable of expressing them. The first year was very different from my second year. My major crisis during my first year was

the open critique by my classmates. It was the first time I had peers responding to my work.

CL: Was it a good response?

MC: The first critique was just devastating because I didn't know why I was painting in this manner. It made me defend my work; it made me think about what I was doing so that my second critique was a little more positive.

CL: Were you still painting academic subjects?

MC: Yes, in fact, the first critique was of my painting of a perfectly hideous model sitting in a chair. It seemed like a silly thing to have to paint. I was then instructed to rework it and figure out something else to do with the model. One of the criticisms was that the figure appeared very flat, although it was quite well rendered; it seemed very two-dimensional. I started thinking that this technique might be interesting to pursue. For the next five years, I explored the idea of combining illusionistic space with space that is quite flat; I even tried cutting holes in the surface. I think I achieved a technique that actually worked very well.

CL: Were you one of the few students painting figuratively?

MC: Yes, many of my instructors and peers did not consider the figure valid. Pop Art had not completely emerged during the 1960's when I was in school. Therefore, a new, different manner of dealing with the figure hadn't surfaced as yet. Much of the art at that point was a redefinition of abstract art and the figure was forgotten. There were a couple of painters who still remembered the figure or who, having abandoned Abstract Expressionism, began to turn once again to the figure. But they were very few, and they didn't really give me the confidence to get up before my professors and peers and say, "I believe I can do this and do this quite well." I didn't have a whole school behind me to say, "Okay, that's all right, go ahead."

CL: Where did you get your security from at that point?

MC: I ended up doing overtly sexual images; you couldn't ignore them. My audacity in creating these images, at that time, gave a validity to them. The professors couldn't figure out any-

thing good to say about them either because they weren't able to comprehend what I was doing; there was no basis for comparison. Since art historians and professors tend to need some sort of precedent from the past in order to validate or invalidate something, they had nothing to which they could relate my work. Therefore, they left me alone and let me continue.

CL: Have you ever painted abstractly?

MC: Yes, I have, but I have no feel for it. If I begin something abstract it always ends up being figurative. I don't think that that's the direction of my intellect; I can't comprehend visual abstraction. However, when I compose a picture now, there are very definite abstract qualities to what I'm doing—in the design elements, composition and so forth.

CL: Where did you move to after your year in Rome?

MC: To the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia for the second year of the MFA program. Their art school was isolated out in the suburbs of Elkins Park.

CL: How long did you remain in Philadelphia?

MC: For another year and then I went to upstate New York and taught at the State University at Oswego for two years.

CL: Was that enjoyable?

MC: It must not have been because I wiped out most of it from my mind. It was a really good learning experience because the faculty was very bright, but that's all I can tell you.

CL: Did your work change at all while you were teaching?

MC: No, which was strange because I think normally major shifts in life tend to alter my imagery if not my style of working. Oswego was pretty much a continuance of Philadelphia which was a continuance of Rome. I was so happy at that point to have found a way of expressing my figurative images that I was reluctant to let go of it. I felt that I had strong images and that I had a good response to what I was creating. I began at this time to feel like an artist, but I really didn't understand what it meant to be an artist.

CL: Do you understand it now?

MC: I think so. I think that evolution has to take place as stagnation is very detrimental to an artist's work. Working is no longer a pleasure when you have to make art that looks like your art. The movement from one image to another is what makes art interesting to me. I'll reach a point where I'll just become exhausted and say, "Okay, that's it," and then I'll take up something else.

CL: Do you constantly have ideas to which you can turn?

MC: My ideas seem to evolve by accident. The rats came out of having done a cover for the *Washington Post Magazine* that dealt with the behavioral scientists at NIMH. They were conducting research using people as rats and guinea pigs. The cover consisted of a tiny person inside a Skinner box with a rat outside. I really like rats, and so I enjoyed doing my rat paintings.

CL: Did you study rats before you started?

MC: No, I had them as pets.

CL: Did you begin the rat imagery when you were in Washington?

MC: Yes, in 1975. I lived in a building that didn't allow pets. The rats weren't noisy, so my landlord didn't know I had them.

CL: How many did you have?

MC: I had two. Actually, I started with three, but one died. In fact, the death was quite traumatic for me because my mother was dying at that period, and it symbolized what was going to happen to her. Do you want to hear an astrological explanation?

CL: Yes, I want to hear all about that. What kind of control does astrology have over your art?

MC: I've always been able to make art more easily than I've been able to talk about art. I don't have a textbook rap to go along with my work. This has always bothered me; it's always made me feel unworthwhile. I would rather drink poison on any occasion than say why I painted something. Astrology is a cop-out in that respect. I can say, "Oh, I did it because . . ." I never look to astrology to get an image, but it gives my art a validity.

CL: Do you read your chart everyday?

MC: Not every day but when I'm going through a particularly hassled period or one full of questions, I'll consult the book and see what I can find out. It's magical because of the way it works. The more you study it, the more you find out things that explain parts of your personality that have bothered you. One of the strongest images is Aquarius, which deals with people, with friendships and relationships. My moon is in Aquarius—that's my ego and subconscious. Most of my art has consistently dealt with people; I think that's my attraction for it. I also have four planets in Scorpio. I once met a woman who said that she had a son who raised rats and snakes and that he, too, was a Scorpio. She told me that rats symbolized death and regeneration and that they were a Scorpion image.

CL: Were you using the rat to symbolize death?

MC: No, I wasn't, but I seem to fall into images that, even though I'm not aware of it at the time, relate back to some sort of astrological source. For the same reason, I am anticipating some major change in my work in the next three months or so. Uranus is passing through my planets.

CL: Do you feel the mannequins—your present subject matter—are the result of that change? Are they a transition period into something else?

MC: It's a transition, but it's also more than that. Both of my parents died within an eight-month period last year. It was very, very difficult for me to work with images of people for some reason, and the mannequins allowed me to continue in my figurative style without having to literally deal with people.

CL: Then why not go back to the rats?

MC: The rats are no longer around, thus, there won't be anymore canvases depicting them.

CL: Is it difficult for you to go through these stages?

MC: No, one just seems to evolve into another one. The nudes started after the rats; the last two rat paintings, *Big J* and *Menage*, were as much about the nudes as they were about rats. I sub-



21. Manon Cleary
Twins, 1974
Collection Conrad Cafritz



25. Manon Cleary
Manon and Randy. 1977
 Collection Robert Lennon

sequently found the mannequin hands in a restaurant in Annapolis. I was attracted to them because they don't look like mannequin hands; instead, they look like my hands. I identified with the hands much more so than I did with the rest of the body so I began to depict them. I am very keen on my new subject due to my early childhood fear of having my hands amputated. To this day, I won't go near power tools or paper cutters. It's just been a fear, and I think my recent paintings are dealing with that fear. I had a psychiatrist friend a week or so ago tell me that the hand paintings, the ones I'm presently working on, were dealing with the idea of separation and death. That's probably what I've been concerned with for the last year and a half. And it may have to do with a constant fear, during my youth, of death.

- CL: Are you afraid of dying?
- MC: I was never afraid of dying. I was afraid of other people dying and of being left alone.
- CL: When you look back at the rat series, are you pleased with them?
- MC: The rats were terrific to work on because they presented wonderful compositional problems, especially the ones combined with people. I tried to make the two figures co-exist in one picture, to make one as important as the other. Also, it was during the rat paintings that I rediscovered oil. I couldn't achieve the necessary effects with acrylic so I abruptly switched. I had not used this medium in ten years, and I was just amazed at the colors that I found. There is a luminosity in oil that just doesn't exist in acrylic paint. Anyway, the white rats were a wonderful vehicle for demonstrating this.
- CL: Do you want the viewer to look at them and only admire their technical virtuosity?
- MC: Yes, but I hope I can also change their preconceptions about rats. These animals are to be confronted; they are not menacing nor frightening. I am surprised when people find my canvases terrifying and shocking; I think they are quite elegant.
- CL: Do you envision another animal series?
- MC: I don't know. It would have to be an animal of which I was quite fond, or it would have to be of one that I found terribly exotic.

CL: Why did you decide to combine the rats with people?

MC: Both Uncle Robby and my pet rat died at about the same time so I decided to portray both of them in one canvas.

CL: Was it difficult to do?

MC: Do you mean was it a difficult balance to make? No, not at all.

CL: Why is Robby dressed in Edwardian garb?

MC: I painted that canvas from the only photograph I owned of Robby. I thought he was a ridiculous character in that dress; actually, I thought it was one of my aunts until my father told me it was one of my uncles. And he happened to be standing on that chair in the photograph so I just transferred that image to the canvas.

CL: Is painting an agonizing process for you?

MC: No, just a pleasure. The only thing that I can compare it to is masturbation. It feels very good; it's rhythmic and it's relaxing, and I know if I go into my studio and work it's going to feel good. I don't have to be nice to people, I can just sit there and work.

CL: Do you work on one piece at a time?

MC: I work on a couple of things at once. However, I only work in one medium at a time—I'll either draw or paint, I can't do both simultaneously.

CL: I know that you draw and paint from photographs; do you consider yourself a Photo Realist?

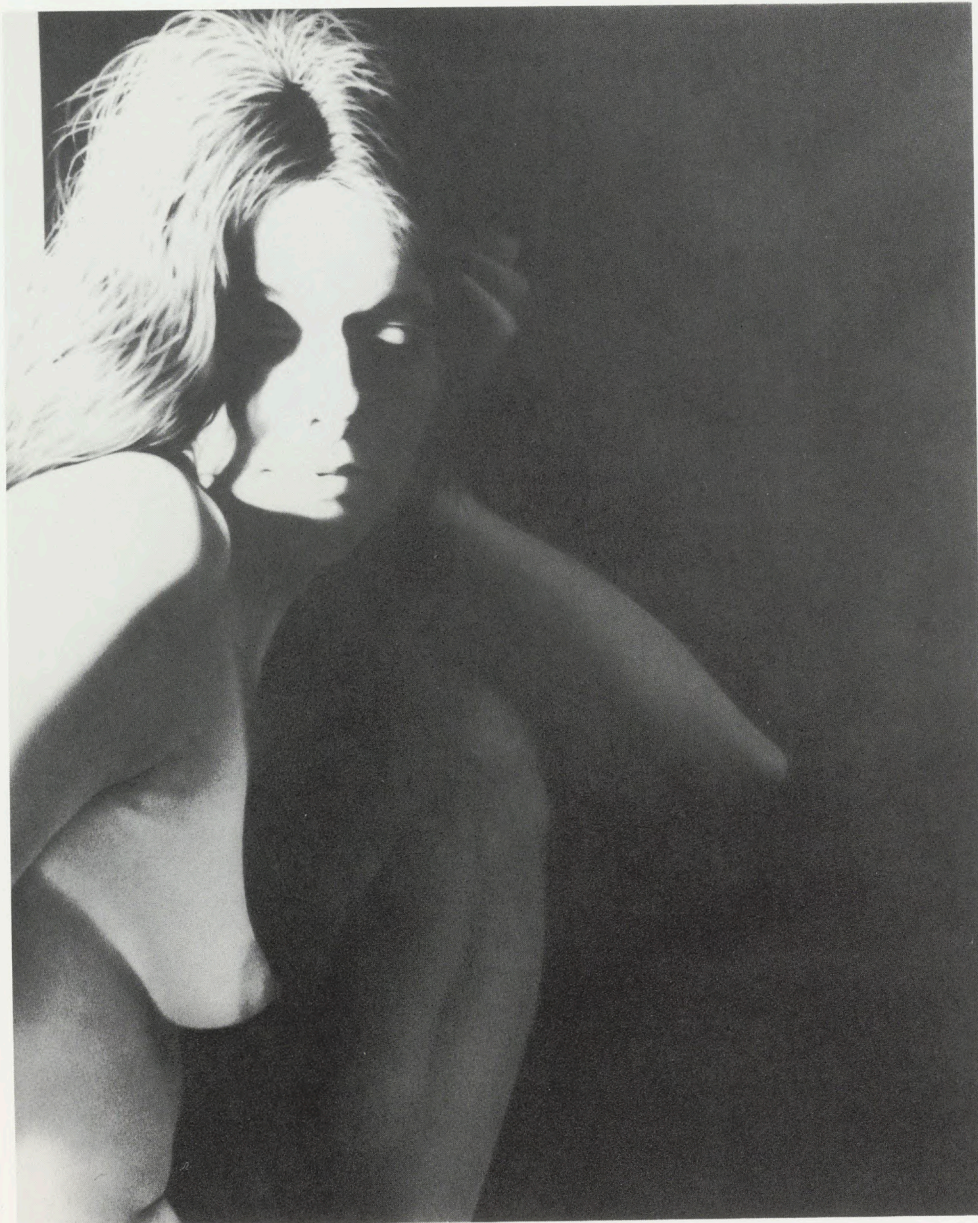
MC: According to the definitions I have heard, I'm not really a Photo Realist even though I work from photographs. I got in the habit of using them when I was in Italy, and there was not the availability of models that I needed. I continue to use them because I teach during the day and work at night; no one is going to pose for me until four in the morning. I think that my imagery is more personal than traditional Photo Realism.

CL: Can you describe your drawing technique?

MC: I've always been frightened of white paper—I never work from it—therefore, I work from paper that I have already toned. I coat the white paper with a fine layer of graphite and then I erase out of it, that is, I draw with my



26. Manon Cleary
Dorothy and Petur. 1978
Collection Rickie Orchin



29. Manon Cleary
Self-Portrait. 1979
 Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.;
 Gift of The Women's Committee of the Corcoran Gallery of Art

eraser. This avoids the confrontation with the white paper on which I am afraid I'll make a mistake.

- CL: What happens if you do make a mistake?
- MC: I'll just fill it in with graphite. It's a lot easier to get rid of light than it is to get rid of dark. There's a glow to graphite that you just don't get from charcoal, that you don't get from anything else like it.
- CL: How did you find graphite? Had you used it in school?
- MC: My watercolor teacher in graduate school had us mixing it with alcohol and painting with it. I didn't find that terribly satisfactory because graphite has its limitations in terms of erasing and so forth, and when I was painting with it, it tended to chalk up a lot. I had it in my studio, and one day I was playing with it and simply started drawing with it.
- CL: Was it difficult to master the graphite?
- MC: It was difficult to make up the technique as I had no precedent. It was necessary to teach myself how to use the medium and to figure out what papers and erasers would work best. I also had to learn how much I could abuse the surface without destroying it.
- CL: Tell me about the twin series.
- MC: The twins arose after I had seen several Diane Arbus photographs, and I strongly identified with them. I thought she didn't know as much as she should about twins, but she certainly did pick up the freakier aspects of having grown up that way.
- CL: Were they difficult drawings to do because they are so terribly personal?
- MC: No, I think that most of my images are very personal so that never bothered me. It's easier to get it out on paper sometimes than it is to get it out verbally.
- CL: Were the twins the first drawings in which you used colored pencils?
- MC: No, my earlier drawings consisted of pastels; actually, the twins were the first drawings that I did since undergraduate school that were straight black and white.
- CL: Did you decide that using color really didn't add anything to the drawings so you merely eliminated it?

MC: I found that the colors available to me in drawing materials were not as fulfilling as the colors with which I could paint. By the time I made those drawings, I had begun to play around with oil, and I found it much more of a treat to run barefoot through 150 colors of oil rather than 23 pencils; there was a limitation as to what I could do in terms of color.

CL: Is it difficult to do self-portraits? Are you more critical of yourself and of the technique?

MC: Yes, both. I do try to make myself look as good as I possibly can. I have a certain idealized vision of myself that holds fast around 1970. I have not yet acknowledged my own aging process in these pieces; I get rid of all the blemishes. Let me add that I feel the self-portraits function mainly as abstract patterns and designs. When I draw or paint some one else, I tend to make them very pretty as well. I don't portray the grotesque—even the rats are beautiful. The only time that I didn't idealize the figure was in the twins series; I believe that was the result of my exorcizing my first twenty-one years of life. Some people look at those drawings and think they're adorable; to me, they are freak pictures.

CL: When did you move to Washington?

MC: In 1970. I came here because Oswego was too cold and my sister was living here at the time; it made sense to go to a city. After fighting for my liberation from my parents for some years, I knew that I didn't want to return home, so I decided to move someplace where I knew at least one person.

CL: Has Washington been important to you? Has it made a difference to your art?

MC: Yes, Washington has been very nice to me. I've learned a great deal about what being an artist is. I always thought it had something to do

with just making art, which I was doing before I moved here. I've learned from my friends that dedication is required in creating art and that sometimes you have to forego sleep if the art is more important to you. I've learned about museums, galleries and the commercial aspects of art—things that I had no concept of before I moved.

CL: Do you see yourself moving away any time soon?

MC: I'm going to Denmark in January, and I think that's going to really influence the way I work; my work changed enormously when I moved to Washington. And it will be my first experience of going off to a city where I don't know a soul, which should be interesting.

CL: Are you a shy person? Will you have trouble meeting people?

MC: Yes, I'm terribly shy. My immediate goal is conquering that shyness. For the first time in my life I have total responsibility for myself; I'm now responsible for all of my good and bad decisions. Maybe my next goal is to grow up, which is a sad state of affairs at my age.

CL: Do you think that this experience will affect your work?

MC: Yes, definitely.

CL: Manon, is your work an obsession with you? Would you go crazy if you couldn't paint or draw?

MC: It's an obsession—I do go crazy when I can't work. I have broken several engagements because I saw the possibility of not being able to continue my art. It's my salvation, my constant; it's always been there, and it's always going to be there to fall back on, to hide in, or for whatever I need it. It's always been there as my ego. I think of myself as an artist and then as a woman—in that order.

JOAN DANZIGER



Born New York City, June 17, 1934.
 Studied Cornell University, Ithaca, New York; B.F.A., 1954.
 Studied Art Students League, Woodstock and New York City, 1954-1955.
 Studied Academy of Fine Arts, Rome, Italy, on grant from Italian Government, 1956-1958.
 Moved to Washington, D.C., 1967.
 Visiting Artist and Lecturer, Corcoran School of Art, 1970.
 D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities, Visual Arts Panel, 1974-1979.
 National Endowment for the Arts Grant; Artist-in-Residence at AFL-CIO Labor Studies Center, Silver Spring, Maryland, 1975.
 Visiting Artist and Lecturer, Mansfield Art Center, Mansfield, Ohio, 1976.
 Visiting Artist and Lecturer, Frostburg State College, Frostburg, Maryland, 1977.
 Lecturer: University of Maryland, Catonsville, Maryland, 1978; Sculpture workshops, Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, Ohio, 1978; Smithsonian Resident Associates, 1977-1979; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia, 1979.

SELECTED INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS

Washington, D.C., Henri Gallery, March 14-April 14, 1970.
 Williamsburg, Virginia, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Museum, December 12, 1970-January 3, 1971.
 Williamsburg, Virginia, 20th Century Gallery, May 4-May 28, 1971.
 St. Mary's City, Maryland, St. Mary's College, January 24-February 11, 1972.
 Washington, D.C., Henri Gallery, March 3-April 3, 1973.
 New Orleans, Louisiana, Galerie Simonne Stern, April 15-May 3, 1973.
 Takoma Park, Maryland, Montgomery College, February 10-March 4, 1975.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, July-August, 1975.
 Fullerton, California, Muckenthaler Cultural Center, June 8-July 31, 1977.
 Los Angeles, California Museum of Science and Industry, December 5, 1977-January 23, 1978.
 Albany, New York, New York State University Art Gallery, January 23-February 17, 1978.
 Catonsville, Maryland, University of Maryland, February 8-February 25, 1978.
 Washington, D.C., Fendrick Gallery, March 31-April 22, 1978.
 Dayton, Ohio, Mead Corporation International Headquarters, April 17-May 5, 1978.
 Rockville, Maryland, Montgomery College, February 19-March 9, 1979.
 Jacksonville, Florida, Jacksonville Museum of Modern Arts and Sciences, October 3, 1979-January 2, 1980.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

New York City, Museum of Contemporary Crafts, "People Figures," November 19, 1967-January 8, 1968.
 Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, "Eastern Central Drawing Association Exhibition," June 30-August 30, 1970.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "Drawing Society National Exhibition," September 25-November 1, 1970.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "New Sculpture: Baltimore, Washington, Richmond," October 9-November 15, 1970.

Atlanta, Georgia, High Museum of Art, "Drawing Society National Exhibition," June 20-July 11, 1971.
 San Antonio, Texas, Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute, "Drawing Society National Exhibition 1970," September 12-October 3, 1971.
 Bonn, West Germany, Art for Embassies Program of the U.S. Department of State, 1972-1977.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "6 from Washington," April 19-April 28, 1972.
 Baltimore, Maryland, The Baltimore Museum of Art, "26th Street Playground Show," June, 1972.
 New York City, Bernard Danenberg Gallery, "Group Exhibition," September-December, 1972.
 Washington, D.C., The Phillips Collection, "Second Annual Exhibition of Washington Artists," December 2-December 31, 1972.
 Philadelphia, Philadelphia Art Alliance, "Washington Sculptors," February 9-March 7, 1973.
 New York City, 55 Mercer Street, "11 from Washington," September 8-September 20, 1973.
 Rochester, New York, Xerox Corporation, "Fun and Fantasy," November 9-December 30, 1973.
 New York City, Fairtree Gallery, "Fun and Fantasy," January 12-February 16, 1974.
 Washington, D.C., Fendrick Gallery, "Soft Pencil Line," April 30-May 18, 1974.
 Corpus Christi, Texas, Art Museum of South Texas, "Gems of Imagination," June 14-August 21, 1974.
 Washington, D.C., Renwick Gallery, National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, "Figure and Fantasy," October 5, 1974-February 9, 1975.
 Rochester, New York, Xerox Corporation, "100 Artists Commemorate 200 Years," February 6-March 21, 1976.
 San Francisco, California, Allrich Gallery, "Imaginations," December 6-December 31, 1977.
 Dayton, Ohio, Dayton Art Institute, "Paper," April 10-July 2, 1978.
 Lincroft, New Jersey, Monmouth Museum, "Curious Creatures and Bizarre Beasts," January 28-April 1, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Fendrick Gallery, "Peaceable Kingdom," May 15-July 7, 1979.
 New York City, Terry Dintenfass Gallery, "Units of Sculpture," June 25-August 17, 1979.

CLAIR LIST: Did you begin to paint and/or draw at an early age?

JOAN DANZIGER: I started to draw when I was about ten years old. I was very solitary, and I liked things which involved individual pursuits, such as, drawing and writing poetry.

CL: Did you take any art courses?

JD: Yes, I was very lucky; my parents recognized that I was interested in art, and at age eleven, they sent me to the Parsons School of Design in New York City. It was funny, I had nude models, and I can remember coming home with my drawings, and my relatives were absolutely horrified. I also took Saturday drawing classes at Queens College. I loved drawing because it was something I could do by myself, and because it was so very personal.

CL: Did you continue your art classes through high school and then into college?

JD: Yes, I did, I went to Cornell University and took a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. I wanted to go to an art school, but my family felt that life was more than just art, and that I should have a well-rounded education, so they insisted I attend an academic college. At that time, Cornell had a traditional art program; the main stress was on the basics of painting and drawing. My work was concerned with organic forms: trees, seashells and other shapes derived from nature.

CL: Did you study sculpture at Cornell?

JD: No, I didn't like sculpture. I took one sculpture class at the beginning, which I hated. I worked with chicken wire and plaster of Paris and abhorred it.

CL: What happened next?

JD: I graduated from Cornell and traveled to Europe in order to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. While there I concentrated on drawing; little pen and ink drawings.

CL: Were they abstract?

JD: No, they were Hieronymous Bosch-like figurative drawings; they were very intimate.

CL: Did they contain any animals?

JD: No, there were no animals. My work was composed of dream-like people who possessed morbid qualities.

CL: When did the animal imagery come into your art?

JD: After Rome, I returned to New York, got my own studio and then started painting. I had a few shows but nothing really important. I began to experiment with everything: figurative painting, abstract painting, etc. — I went through a lot of different styles. I was still drawing, and, suddenly, pen and ink drawings became a very important aspect of my art. I could just sit for hours and work on them. They were composed of strange people hiding behind eyeglasses. These small drawings then evolved into large colorful canvases where I drew on a painted surface.

CL: How and when did you finally turn to sculpture?

JD: I was friendly with several sculptors in New York, and when they came over to see my work, many of them would say, "Your drawings look like studies for sculpture. Why don't you try sculpting?"

CL: Had you ever considered doing just that?

JD: No, I wasn't sure how to begin. Then I met Nora Jaffe—we were both exhibiting at the Van Bovenkamp Gallery in New York—and we used to talk about sculpture. I was quite interested in translating my images—these figurative people behind glasses—into three-dimensional forms. She said, "Why don't you come up to my studio, and we'll talk about it?" I did, and it was there that I made my first piece. I was almost self-taught when I first started as I was adapting an already established image. My first piece was supposed to be a figure with a mask on a bicycle, and it ended up as a standing piece. The work was included in a show entitled "People Figures" at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York. The curator heard about my sculpture, came to see it and put me in the show.

CL: What's the dating of this?

JD: About 1967. Many figurative sculptors were represented, and there I was with my lady who couldn't even stand. They didn't know what to do with her, so they suspended her from the ceiling. But it wasn't made to be suspended, because when it was hanging I noticed I hadn't painted the underside of the boot.

CL: What did the piece look like?

JD: It was a big fat woman with glasses. And that started it.

CL: Were you hooked on sculpture from then on?

JD: Yes, definitely. I have never been bored since, and I have never left the medium. I still love to do the drawings—they have become studies for my sculpture. But there's something about working with three dimensions that's absolutely fascinating. The conceiving, the making, the building up, the end result is all quite intricate—it's a very long, laborious process which I invented for myself, but I adore it.

CL: When did you begin to use the animal masks?

JD: About ten years ago. I have always been involved with masquerades, even as a kid I liked the idea of masks and hiding. I think that everyone wears a lot of masks; I know that I am always hiding behind them. I became very involved with color and form, but I found out that just making human figures was too restrictive. I got involved with animal imagery; with their colors, shapes, forms, etc. I found them much more stimulating to work with. In fact, I made a statement once that I found animals more interesting than humans, and people got upset about that. If you think about it, they are, because they have all those wonderful ears and horns and other obtrusions.

CL: Is that what first appealed to you?

JD: Yes, but you must understand that I am not making animals. I'm making people behind animals. I'm making a metamorphosis of the animal over the person's face. There are a lot of complicated ideas in those pieces.

CL: What do you mean?

JD: The work represents my personal mythology. It is concerned with my ideas about people, their relationships to each other and to the world around them. The sculptures are involved with the irrational versus the rational.

CL: Do you find that most people recognize that, in fact, it is not a sculpture of an animal, but, that it is of an individual wearing an animal mask?

JD: Sometimes, it depends on what the viewer brings to the sculpture. Some people really want to see it as pure animal, even though it's

apparent that it has human hands and feet. Others see it as mask imagery; a lot of it has to do with their own psyche. Some people find the pieces funny and whimsical, some find them frightening, some find them distorted; everyone interprets them differently.

CL: Why did you use such a large size in the early 1970's?

JD: A lot of my earlier pieces were exceptionally large because I wanted them to be a little larger than life, I wanted them to confront people. Basically, in my first series—the musicians—I was concerned with creating an environment. Instead of having a show of individual pieces, you would walk into an environment.

CL: Would all the musicians be grouped together?

JD: The five big pieces were grouped together because I wanted them to make an overwhelming statement. The musicians are full of life; they are active participants. My second show was suspended pieces; they are involved with movement and light. Again, I wanted to create a sense of an environment of a circus composed of acrobats. I used all of that wonderful air space and ceiling space. Now, I'm less involved with that.

CL: When and why did you start making the wall sculptures?

JD: I started the series about three years ago. I called it the "Limp Ragdoll" series, and it was something I felt like a few years ago—I felt limp and depressed. You could pick me up and put me on the wall. Also, I was exploring new design techniques; I felt that on the wall they would be free and wouldn't need any support. Thirdly, the pieces create intriguing shadows. There is a mysterious play of light and shadow which I wanted to capture in the pieces, and this device solved the problem.

CL: Are you making a personal statement?

JD: Yes, the works are interlaced with fragments of my life. For instance, the pieces on the wall were me—when I finally took off the mask. There's one figure, *Girl in a Star Dress*, and she's holding her mask; her blank face is in shadow so you can't actually see it. I wrapped plaster of Paris bandages around it, and some

people think she looks wounded, but she isn't.

JD: Is she wrapped up like a mummy because she is dead?

JD: No, she's not dead—she's very alive. She's just in shadow. She's mysterious and mystical and magical. At that time, I didn't think I had to show or tell everything; there was no reason. You can look at it and bring a face to it.

CL: Do you mean it's like a mirror?

JD: Yes, even though she is faceless, she could be a reflection of oneself.

CL: How do you come up with your imagery?

JD: The pieces come out of different ideas. For instance, the musical series was always fascinating because of the idea of movement and instruments, and the idea of the instrument being two things at once: the actual instrument and the combination of an animal figure and an instrument. They are fantasy interpretations. The wall pieces, however, are more personal; in fact, I dreamed about them. My series of people as chairs started as a series of thrones. I also made some thrones as separate sculpture and some with figures in the thrones. Bicycle riders, birds and butterfly men, acrobats, heroes and Queens are other series I have done.

CL: It seems that almost all of your figures are women—why is that?

JD: I like the roundness of women. All my forms are concerned with roundness: round buttocks, round breasts, round shoulders, etc. I like the female body.

CL: Do you choose your animals by their round forms?

JD: Many people think that I have personal reasons for choosing the animals, but actually I select them by their texture, color, form. I've used giraffes, zebras and frogs quite often because of their abstract geometric patterns. I use a lot of rhinos because I like their horns and ears and the wonderful linear quality of their skin.

CL: Do you like the horn because of its threatening quality?

JD: No, I never think of that. I like the horn because I see it as a powerful abstract form, and I like the space it creates. Because I am in-

volved in three-dimensionality, I want to create a lot of excitement in that space.

CL: Tell me about your fascination with birds?

JD: I am very involved with birds of prey—ravens, eagles, hawks—because they are strong, powerful, mysterious and very remote. I either use them as masks for my hidden people or as half-masks to show the closeness of the bird-people relationship; that is, the interplay between spirit and human form.

CL: In *Olivia Chance*, how did you pick the three masks to hang around her neck? What do they mean?

JD: I think of *Olivia Chance* as a mask vendor. She's holding all her different interchangeable masks. She has a happy mask, a sad mask, a powerful mask, etc.

CL: So really the mask relates to the figure's mood?

JD: That's right, the masks relate to the moods of life.

CL: Have you ever had to throw any of your figures away because they just didn't work?

JD: It's very rare that I abandon a sculpture. I have carefully drawn them out beforehand so I know exactly what I'm going to say. If I don't think it's going to be a good sculpture, I don't make it. I did one years ago where I left some of the chicken wire open. I thought that was an interesting idea, leaving the open chicken wire and wrapping material in and out of it. I exhibited it for awhile, but I felt that it was unsuccessful, so I destroyed the piece.

CL: When did you begin using pencil on the figures?

JD: First I used ink because the colors of the animals were very strong, very bold. I have always drawn on the sculpture with pen and ink because they define the form. If you look at a piece without the pen and ink it takes on a different aspect; it is much more abstract. Then, for some unconscious reason, my colors started to change. They became much quieter and much more subtle; the pen and ink became too bold for them, so I switched to pencil.

CL: Would you label yourself a Surrealist?

JD: Well, I'm not really a Surrealist, but I work in a fantasy concept.



33. Joan Danziger
Girl in a Star Dress. 1977
Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.



35. Joan Danziger
Olivia Chance. 1977
 Courtesy Terry Dintenfass Gallery, New York City

CL: Is it the juxtaposition of the images and the mystic quality that perhaps could align you with the Surrealists?

JD: Many sculptures come directly out of my subconscious; I dream about them. My works should confront, confuse, excite, create joy and be many things at the same time. Art is a constant exploration of the unknown, and I use my imagination to open up new boundaries.

CL: How else have you used the concept of the mask?

JD: I got involved with half-masks. That is, you have a face with half a mask on top of it. It's as if you lifted up the mask.

CL: Is it an actual face or is it faceless?

JD: No, there is a human face underneath the mask.

CL: Where did you get your human face? Is it a portrait of you or of people you know?

JD: No, no. It's an abstract face that I made. But everytime I look at it, it always seems to be the same face. It has a Roman quality, an Etruscan quality. But, the mask is different. It could be half of a mask, it could be a lizard mask or a gazelle mask. I started with the face, and then I abandoned it. And now I'm returning to it, but I'm still giving it an animal head on top. It's really a play of magic, poetry and symbolism.

CL: Joan, who are these people? Who is wearing the mask?

JD: No one in particular, and yet everyone.

CL: Did you get the idea of suspending your pieces from that first New York show?

JD: No, that was not a satisfying piece because it wasn't made to suspend. When I make a piece I have to know exactly what it's going to do. Suspended pieces are made so that when they are in space, they work; that is, they are light and they utilize the environment. For example, *Brindabella* came out of my unsuccessful experiment with open chicken wire. I finally got it to work by making the bicycle out of chicken wire because it creates a very airy, lacy quality. I put a figure on top of it so that the heavy, covered figure contrasts with the chicken wire of the bicycle, and then I suspended it. The

sculptures are very complicated because you have to be aware of space, material, form and contrast.

CL: Can you briefly describe your technique?

JD: A lot of people think that I use papier-mâché, however, the sculpture is composed of resin-reinforced fabric over a wire and wood armature. I then apply celluclay and let it dry.

CL: Do you apply it with your hands?

JD: Yes, that is very important because your hands allow you to fill in, model and build out the surface. It's a wonderful substance because it hardens like cement. When it hardens, I sand it.

CL: Is that why the surface is white?

JD: No, the celluclay dries to a grey color. On top of the celluclay goes a coating of Elmer's glue which seals it. I paint the work with gesso and then with acrylic polymer. Then pen and ink lines or pencil lines are drawn over the surface to emphasize the linear form.

CL: Did it take you a long time to perfect the technique? Or did you experiment in the beginning to see what worked best and what you could do the fastest?

JD: I never experimented because I arrived at this technique by a process of elimination. I didn't want to start with a bulky object; I wanted to build an armature where I would have more control so I eliminated wood and marble.

CL: Why did you decide against papier-mâché?

JD: Papier-mâché is fragile, and its temporary. I wasn't going to put that much time into my work and have it destroyed. My technique results in a very durable piece. In short, what I am trying to do is to build up the piece and at the same time have a material which is durable. I need a surface which has flexibility so that I can paint and draw on it.

CL: Are your pieces humorous?

JD: If there is humor, it just come unconsciously. I don't think about it at all. I get an idea, and I do it; then I go on to my next piece. It just happens that some of the pieces are more frightening and some more mysterious.

CL: Do you want your art to challenge the viewer on an intellectual or on an emotional level, or both?



37. Joan Danziger
Otto Midford. 1979
Collection Susan L. and Dixon M. Butler



38. Joan Danziger
Reba—The Rhino Queen. 1979
 Courtesy Terry Dintenfass Gallery, New York City

JD: I find it intellectually challenging, there are a lot of intellectual problems, yet it is also to be dealt with on a subjective level.

CL: When you say intellectual problems, do you mean with the technique?

JD: Not only technically but with realizing the idea. There is an idea behind it, it's not an abstract concept. The work is closely connected with the figure's place in society.

CL: What do you mean? And, isn't that subjective?

JD: I think that we all are hiding from society, be it our emotions, our ideas, our thoughts, our beliefs. We hide ourselves from each other. Many times people are too frightened to say what they think, to be totally honest. It is risky to do so, thus, most of us remain behind our masks of mystery and ambiguity. There are double meanings in the pieces. I think that's why people find them so terribly disquieting. They look at a piece and say, "Well, I'm not really sure what that is or what it is supposed to be doing."

CL: How do you choose your titles?

JD: The titles come after the pieces are finished. Some suggest themselves, and others take a great deal of thought. I generally use old-fashioned names, such as Regina and Albertine, because they are reminiscent of another world.

CL: Tell me about the clothing and the shoes.

JD: The clothing is important, but not as clothing, just as color. I treat it as a purely decorative element. The shoes really come from my own shoe wardrobe. I wear sandals and striped socks, and I like those big fat boots and hiking shoes. The reason I have one shoe on and one shoe off is because I feel that life is asymmetrical, nothing is the same. One foot is as different from the other as our faces are different from each other.

CL: When you look back at your work over the past ten years, are you satisfied with what you have done?

JD: I'm amazed at what I have accomplished and completed. It's taken a lot of personal sacrifice; it's taken away an enormous amount of leisure time. I am deeply committed to my work, and so I have had to make these sacrifices.

CL: Can you see the growth and development?

JD: Yes, I can really see a statement of my development. My work has grown—it has become more intricate in its creation and much stronger in content.

CL: Do you need constant reinforcement?

JD: No, that has never been important; I have never really cared about it. I never really needed the support of other people or group encouragement; I am deeply absorbed in what I am trying to say. There has always been a reaction to my work by the public, be it positive or negative. I was an artist-in-residence for six months at the George Meany Labor Studies Center in Silver Spring. While there, I made two large fantasy sculptures of a carpenter and a welder. As I was working, people constantly interrupted me to say, "You know, we may not like it, but we'll never walk by it without looking at it!" To me, that is a tremendous compliment—that makes it all worthwhile.

REBECCA DAVENPORT



Born Alexandria, Virginia, June 29, 1943.
 Studied Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York; B.F.A., 1970.
 Graduate Assistantship, University of North Carolina, 1970-1973.
 Virginia Museum Graduate Fellowship Grant, 1971-1972.
 Studied University of North Carolina at Greensboro; M.F.A., 1973.
 Moved to Washington, D.C., 1973.
 Third Gold Palette, Cagnes-sur-Mer, France, 1977.
 Virginia Museum Artist Fellowship Grant, 1978.
 Awarded Artist Fellowship, National Endowment for the Arts, 1979.

SELECTED INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS

Richmond, Virginia, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, September 5-October 7, 1973.
 Washington, D.C., Pyramid Galleries Ltd., February 5-March 9, 1974.
 Norfolk, Virginia, Chrysler Museum, November 19-December 31, 1974.
 Washington, D.C., Pyramid Galleries Ltd., October 21-November 20, 1976.
 Washington, D.C., Fendrick Gallery, January 30-March 3, 1979.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Gallery of Contemporary Arts, "Southeastern Artists," 1970-1971.
 Richmond, Virginia, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, "Virginia Artists 1971," May 3-June 7, 1971.
 Washington, D.C., Pyramid Galleries Ltd., "The Figure," October 31-November 25, 1972.
 Greensboro, North Carolina, Weatherspoon Art Gallery, January 8-January 14, 1973.
 Richmond, Virginia, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, "Virginia Artists 1973," May 7-June 4, 1973.
 New York City, 55 Mercer Street, "11 from Washington September 8-September 20, 1973.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "Washington Figurative Artists," December 15, 1973-January 20, 1974.

Philadelphia, Marian Locks Gallery, "Washington in Philadelphia," January 10-January 31, 1976.
 Norfolk, Virginia, Chrysler Museum, "300 Years of American Art," February 2-September 30, 1976.
 Miami, Florida, Miami Art Center, Inc., "Contemporary American Painters," February 15-March 24, 1976.
 Aarhus, Denmark, Aarhus Kunstmuseum, "The Liberation: 14 American Artists," a U.S.I.A. exhibition traveling through Europe, April 1976-November 1977.
 New York City, ACA Gallery, "Four Young Realists," June 3-July 1, 1977.
 Cagnes-sur-Mer, France, IX Festival International de la Peinture, July 2-September 30, 1977.
 New York City, Harold Reed Gallery, "Selected 20th Century Nudes," February 16-March 4, 1978.
 Cagnes-sur-Mer, France, X Festival International de la Peinture, July 1-September 20, 1978.
 Washington, D.C., Middendorf/Lane, "Washington Realists," September 10-October 20, 1978.
 Paris, France, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Exhibition of prize winners from the previous five years of Festival International, October 5-November 5, 1978.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "From the Women's Committee," March 21-April 22, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Fendrick Gallery, "Peaceable Kingdom," May 15-July 7, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Osuna Gallery, "Summer at Osuna," July 10-August 17, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Middendorf/Lane, "Small Works," September 11-September 29, 1979.

CLAIR LIST: When and how did you decide to paint?

REBECCA D'AVENPORT: I used to be very shy, and I didn't have any way of articulating my experiences, and so I decided to paint them. I consider my work very personal; I have had some life experiences that I feel were very profound.

CL: Can you verbalize them now?

RD: When I was eighteen or nineteen I lived with a country musician by the name of Johnny Pancake; we lived in Suitland, Maryland, in this horrible little apartment. I keep going back to this experience because it manifested itself in my "White Soul" paintings. My series of older women resulted from my obsession with my own aging; my various influences and experiences are reflected throughout the work.

CL: Were you painting or drawing at the time you lived with Johnny Pancake?

RD: I'd always had a natural facility for drawing, and I'd experimented with painting. At that particular time, I was going to drafting school in Washington. Working as a draftsman with the city planning firm made me realize that I wasn't going to get anywhere if I didn't have my degree. I decided to re-enroll in school; I applied to Pratt Institute and was accepted.

CL: How old were you?

RD: I was about twenty-three, and I started at the beginning.

CL: Did you enjoy it?

RD: I absolutely loved it.

CL: Was it difficult to move to New York City?

RD: I was terrified of New York. I had only lived in Washington up to then, and Washington is a very different city, much more provincial and Southern. New York still scares me: it can be the loneliest place in the world.

CL: Did you study with anyone at Pratt that influenced you in any way?

RD: When I began to take courses, I really was unsure of what I wanted to do. I didn't know whether I wanted to make prints, paintings or something else. Gradually, though, I realized that painting was the best vehicle for expressing my experiences.

CL: What kind of work were you doing when you were in school?

RD: The first couple of years I painted abstractly, but I couldn't relate to the style. Suddenly, the Junior painting teacher we had left Pratt, due to illness, and we were assigned a substitute, Bernie Abdicar. I thought he was an absolutely awful man—he bragged incessantly about his womanizing—but he forced us to speak about our work. He made us articulate our feelings, and it was total agony. He made me very angry, and I responded to him by making paintings of plates with breasts lying on them, as if they were fried eggs.

CL: Do you mean that suddenly you simply started painting plates?

RD: Yes, I had been working on a canvas, and I immediately painted over it. I don't know where the imagery came from, but Abdicar responded to the piece immediately and encouraged me. Then I reacted by depicting floating food in a sexual manner. I searched magazines for subject matter and chose foods such as olives and pimentos because I found them terribly seductive in content. I don't know why I was so insistent in giving the canvas a sexual overtone. I discovered that I was more comfortable and happier painting in a representational mode.

CL: When did you begin depicting the entire human figure?

RD: One aspect led to another, and eventually I began to combine the floating food with pin-ups. At that time, I became fascinated by 42nd Street, with its marketplace, its lights, its prostitutes. I gradually eliminated the food and presented only the women—yet they were headless. I was searching for an anonymous body.

CL: When you look back at that work, do you have any idea what made you get rid of the food and concentrate on the women?

RD: Yes, I think it was sexual feelings, sexual hang-ups about my own body.

CL: Did you paint an exaggerated body?

RD: First they were plastic bodies, and then over time the bodies became imperfect. Finally, I moved into painting much older women.

CL: When you were in New York, were you looking at any of the Photo Realists? Was that helpful to you?

RD: Mel Ramos and his pin-ups always interested me, and when I saw "22 Realists" in 1970 at the Whitney Museum I got very excited.

CL: Did your work change after seeing that exhibition, did it encourage you to continue?

RD: It reaffirmed that I was doing what was right for me, and it encouraged me to pursue my art.

CL: After graduating from Pratt in 1970, did you return to Washington?

RD: No. One of my teachers at Pratt had moved to Greensboro in order to teach at the University of North Carolina. He came up to New York in order to recruit students for their graduate school, and he convinced me to try it. Originally I thought that I would stay in New York, but I realized I wasn't ready, I was too unformed. When the University offered me an assistantship I grabbed it and moved to North Carolina. It proved to be one of the best decisions I have ever made.

CL: Did the school leave you alone so that you could paint?

RD: Yes, I worked very hard, I just loved it. When I first started painting and was sure of what I wanted to express, I worked endless hours in my studio. I painted, struggled, agonized; I had no control over myself. I became addicted to my art; I couldn't get enough of it. Now after years and years of painting it's no longer the same.

CL: Aren't you compelled to work anymore?

RD: Yes, I feel compelled to work.

CL: Do you sometimes have to force yourself to paint?

RD: Sometimes, but I am so used to it now, it has become a way of life. However, it's not as exciting as it was then. There are still moments when it is, but that's a very special feeling.

CL: What were you painting during your stay in Greensboro?

RD: That's when I started to do the older women.

CL: Were you bothered at all at this point about the sexual connotations of this work?

RD: I had another experience in graduate school that I want to relate. Ben Burns, a sculptor from New York, was teaching at the University. He held graduate evaluations every 6 months; you

would bring in your work, and he would critique it. At this point, my women were more angry, more aggressive, than before. There was a toughness rather than a vulnerability about them, yet I was not fully aware of this, and when I walked into class for the critique, he really attacked me. He was violently affected by these paintings and he said, "Why do you want to depict such horrible things? Why do you want to do this?" He really frightened me; he criticized me, and I couldn't understand why. I went home and started thinking about my work, and I decided that I had better learn how to defend myself. I needed a reason for doing these paintings, and I needed to be able to speak about them. My conclusion was that the paintings of older women were terribly personal; it was at this time that I turned thirty, and I was coming to terms psychologically with the aging of my own body. After I realized and articulated these feelings, it was no longer hard to talk about my art. I'm a narrative painter: I paint about my own experiences, my inner self. I can look back, and I can see the influences.

CL: You mean environmental influences?

RD: Yes, the people around me and my age and my emotional status at the time. One can follow all of this throughout my work. I can't express my experiences right away; I have to let them grow, and then I am able to paint them. When I look back on my work I can examine the happenings of my youth.

CL: Do the paintings ever reflect your moods?

RD: I wouldn't call it a mood because it's sustained over a long period of time.

CL: Then what happened? Did you continue portraying the older women?

RD: No, my brother, who is a photographer and filmmaker—we once made a movie together—sent me a photograph of my mother and sister-in-law which intrigued me. That was the beginning of *The Daughter-In-Law*.

CL: Had you painted the older women from photographs?

RD: Yes, but the older women were derived from pictures of pin-ups that I cut out of magazines. I changed and rearranged the figures.

CL: When your brother gave you the photograph did you know immediately that you wanted to paint the scene?

RD: No, I had to think about it for a long while because it was a psychological experiment; I wanted to find out how I felt about my sister-in-law. It partially fit in with my style because my mother is an older woman. I decided to paint them and see what would happen; I just let the piece go where it wanted to go. I worked on that painting for four months which was longer than I had ever worked on anything else. At that time, I could complete a painting in two weeks.

CL: Did you agonize over it?

RD: Yes, I did, but I learned a lot.

CL: About yourself, about your relationship with your sister-in-law or what?

RD: Yes, I learned an enormous amount about my sister-in-law and how I felt. I realized I actually liked her. Most people won't react to the painting in that way; I've had both very negative and very positive reactions to it. It also made me tackle some technical problems that I had not dealt with before.

CL: Which ones?

RD: There is a landscape in the painting which looks like a theater backdrop. It is an extremely flat surface, and this makes the figures look more dimensional. I also feel that there's a lot of humor in the piece as well.

CL: I feel that way too. I think it's more humorous than your other pieces. I find several of your canvases frightening because the people tend to look somewhat demented.

RD: To be perfectly honest, part of that comes out of my lack of skills. A lot of distortions occurred because I just didn't have the ability to correctly draw the figures.

CL: I find that hard to believe.

RD: That's true, I think it's true. They're distortions that look a little strange, and sometimes I'm shocked when I haven't seen a painting in a long time. But when I painted the canvases, I didn't feel they were the least bit scary.

CL: You couldn't have thought them tame and pleasant.

RD: No, I knew they were tough; there was a toughness.

CL: Are you making fun of these people?

RD: No, I never intended to make fun of anyone.

CL: How do you feel about the individuals that you have portrayed who have trouble dealing with what you have created? Those that cannot even hang the piece because they find it too disturbing?

RD: I feel that the canvas is not really them; it's not a portrait of them. It's a portrait about them, about certain aspects of their lives.

CL: What do you mean? Give me an example.

RD: The figures must become types in a sense. This is more so in the "White Soul" paintings than the other portraits.

CL: Tell me about that. Do you personally know the people that you portray?

RD: Most of the "White Soul" people were individuals that I did not know personally. They were derived from photographs that my brother had taken; they were mostly people from Arkansas, like the *Arkansas Sheriff*. I knew types like them, and I associated them with people that I had met in my past.

CL: Did your brother take one photograph of the sheriff that you used, or were there many photographs?

RD: He took many photographs of the man.

CL: Did you paint the portrait from a bunch of them?

RD: Yes, I used his reference, but then I changed, distorted and simplified the piece, particularly the background.

CL: So rather than just being a portrait of one man it is a portrait of all Southern sheriffs?

RD: Yes.

CL: Let's go back—how did you get to these subjects?

RD: They came out of my experience with Johnny Pancake; I wanted to talk about "White Soul," which is a pride and dignity in self and race, combined with the utter irony of defeat.

CL: Isn't there more dignity than irony? Don't these people take their tradition very seriously?



39. Rebecca Davenport
The Daughter-in-Law. 1972
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Davenport



42. Rebecca Davenport
Fred's Family. 1974
 Private collection

RD: Yes, they are dignified yet vulnerable at the same time. I wished to capture qualities of endurance, faith, a mixture of good and evil—features relevant to all of us, to the human condition.

CL: Were these people that you painted all working class people? Was that important to you?

RD: Yes, they are people who grew up or existed on farms. I knew some of them personally, as they worked for my father.

CL: Is it difficult to do someone that you know as opposed to just photographs of types?

RD: Actually, it's easier.

CL: Why is that?

RD: Because I can relate to someone much more specifically. And visually you can be more accurate because you can constantly look at the people themselves as points of reference.

CL: Were you yourself taking photographs by that time?

RD: Yes.

CL: When did you begin to use only your photographs as a starting point rather than those of your brother?

RD: I very rarely use his photographs anymore. I was still using them when I came to Washington in 1973. But shortly after the move, I started taking my own photographs.

CL: Tell me about *Fred's Family*.

RD: I painted *Fred's Family* from a photograph that my brother had taken.

CL: Did he know Fred?

RD: Yes, Fred and he were classmates in college.

CL: What was it about him that appealed to you?

RD: I don't know, technically, it excited me and I like Fred so much. He is a gentle, wonderful man and the father and mother to his family. I knew I wanted to depict his family yet it offered me a challenge, it was an experiment to see how I would deal with the concept. I had never coped with so many elements before in one canvas.

CL: Was it confusing?

RD: No, it was a joy, because when I came to Washington, I hit a vacuum.

CL: You mean you didn't know what to do?

RD: I couldn't work for a while. I was finishing up some "White Soul" canvases for a show, but I felt my work wasn't going anywhere; I began to tread water. After studying the photograph of Fred's family for a long while, I decided to try working with it. It was complex, and I thought that it was what I needed to get through this period. And, *Fred's Family* was an absolute pleasure to paint. It was one of those very special paintings that paint themselves; I didn't have any problems with it.

CL: Had you ever really enjoyed painting before?

RD: Yes, but I hadn't for a long while and not to this degree. Every painting is a little bit different, some go easier than others.

CL: Was it a pivotal piece in your career?

RD: Yes, it even relates to what I'm doing now with interiors. Perhaps it is the first interior.

CL: Do you still feel that canvases like the *Fat Man* and the *Arkansas Sheriff* are very personal?

RD: Yes, but my work has changed. That's a period that I went through; I got it out of my system. *Bicentennial* was about the last "White Soul" painting I did, and that said it all for me; that was the end. I did one more after that, but it didn't work, the feeling wasn't there. I may come back to portraits some day, but presently I'm moving. My influences and images have shifted from the rural South to an urban environment.

CL: Has that been a difficult break?

RD: No, it's been gradual. The portraits were a break—the Davenport series—the paintings of people sitting on sofas. In a way that was a breathing spell for me. Then, I needed to find a new direction and I stumbled upon the walls. They are more like abstractions in a sense, but they're also dealing with oldness and decay. Presently, I am painting interiors.

CL: Are you looking to confront the viewer?

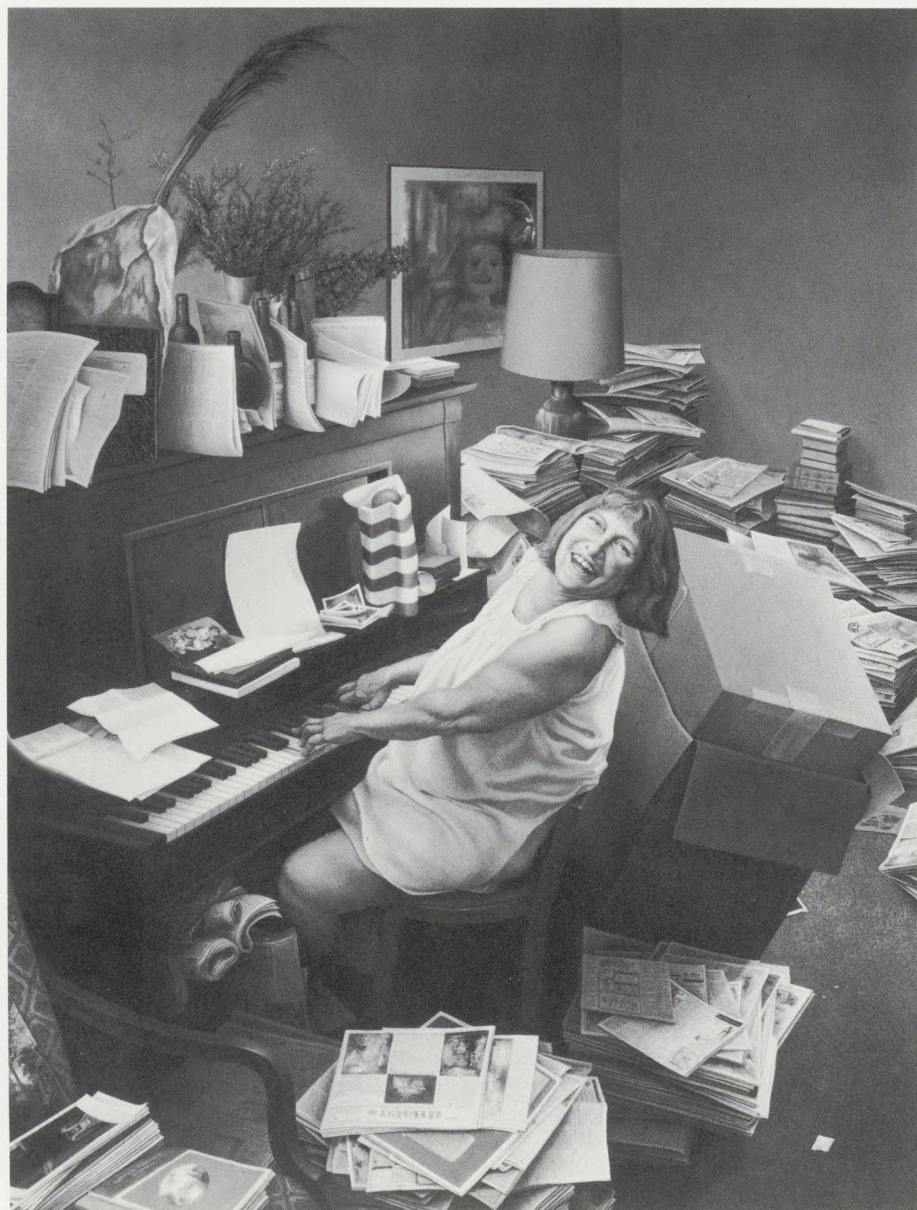
RD: Yes, I really want and need a reaction.

CL: What kind of reaction?

RD: I don't know, but just a reaction. I want the subject to challenge the viewer so that the viewer has the responsibility to react. Each observer always brings his or her own life style to this; they react out of their own background.



43. Rebecca Davenport
Bicentennial. 1975
Collection Charles and Donna Citrin



45. Rebecca Davenport
Frantic Fran. 1978
 Courtesy Middendorf/Lane, Washington, D.C.

- CL: Is achieving that reaction and confrontation by the viewer your goal?
- RD: Yes, in most of the pieces. I want the viewer to respond to my own articulated feelings.
- CL: About these people or about yourself and your life?
- RD: Yes, about all that I have experienced. I must go out to the edge and be honest about my feelings, to be truthful, because otherwise the end result is very ordinary and boring. I take many risks when I paint; I have to take people with me when I explore my inner realm. Diane Arbus said that she wanted to go where nobody had been before. I think she did; I think that's why she died.
- CL: Could you ever paint from one of her photographs or would that be too confusing, too strange?
- RD: No, I think it would be quite fascinating, but, honestly, what could I possibly add to it?
- CL: Have you ever focused on the outcasts of society as she did?
- RD: No, that's not my point at all. There's a difference, and I think that's why she reached a point of no return. Diane Arbus concentrated on freaks; she didn't consider them fellow human beings. I find people fantastic because they are so full of contradictions and inconsistencies yet in the long run everyone is the same. We are all alike, it's just a question of opening your eyes.
- CL: It doesn't matter if you're a sheriff, or if you're a crazy old woman, we're all the same?
- RD: Yes, our life experiences make us slightly different. Basically we all want love, we all experience emotions, frustrations and so on, we all have to go to the bathroom, and we all have to eat.
- CL: So you've been trying to capture that in your work?
- RD: Yes, my definition of art in a sense is altering your way of seeing, opening your eyes so that

you may never look at a sheriff, or a redneck or even a wall or interior the same way.

CL: Tell me about *Frantic Fran*.

RD: I'd started thinking that no one had seriously, as far as I could tell, dealt with older people to any great extent. That is, no one had attempted to paint the older mood. I thought that it was a terrific idea and decided to pursue it.

CL: Are you trying to glorify these elderly people?

RD: I guess in a sense I am.

CL: Are you portraying those that have had a hard life yet have survived to an old age?

RD: Yes, maybe these canvases are about survival. As Jellyroll Morton once said, "You should never forget all of the joy along with the weeping." I wanted to capture their experiences and Fran just seemed right. She is in her sixties, she had been a performer, and she had gotten very fat in the last couple of years. Linda, her daughter, and I were good friends, and I mentioned my idea to her, and she took me to see her mother. It was actually a wonderful experience because Fran is a woman who is full of love, yet she is quite frantic, she's always performing. After the third day of visiting with her, I asked her if she would pose nude for me. She said no, she didn't want to because she was too self-conscious. Instead she put on this short pink nightie and one white sock—she could only find one to wear. We started the session, and she started performing and soon got into the whole rhythm of posing. I was clicking away with the camera, and all of a sudden she whipped off her nightie, threw it across her shoulder and just stood there. It was absolutely magnificent, and I was so excited. I was saying this was going to be the best thing that I had ever done in my whole life.

CL: Did you paint her in the nude?

RD: Yes, I did, that's the first interior. I returned to Washington after my visit, but I moved too fast. That's why I say paintings have to grow, and I didn't let this one. I was just so excited by the whole experience and its possibilities that I felt that it would gel somehow. I started the canvas depicting Fran in the middle of it

with her nightie thrown across her shoulders. However, I realized I was more interested in the clutter of objects around her than in her portrait; I became terribly confused.

CL: So you tried to portray Fran and it didn't work?

RD: It didn't work.

CL: How did you get to the format that you eventually painted?

RD: First I depicted Fran's room while painting her figure out of the picture. I was really excited about this new territory, but I still wanted to express the joy that she has when she plays the piano, when she performs, because that's so much a part of her. When she sings these old songs, she thrusts herself out at the audience in order to get you to come in, to come closer. That was what I hoped to achieve in that piece; I believe I did. Then I moved away from figures; I wanted to stop for a while. I wanted to concentrate on the figure's environment, and that is what I am presently doing. I think what eventually will happen is that I will start putting the people back into their spaces.

CL: Do you work on one piece at a time?

RD: No. When I'm finishing a piece, I'm starting to think about the next one.

CL: Do you sketch it out?

RD: I take the photographs, and I study them. I have thousands of photographs that I go through.

CL: Rebecca, for whom do you paint?

RD: For myself, at least I hope I do, because I think once you begin to paint for somebody else or for the business, you are dead. I also believe that any artist who says that they paint solely for themselves is not being honest. It is vital to get your feelings and your experiences out on canvas, but you also want someone to see them, to share them with you.

CL: Have you felt that most people have been fairly sympathetic to your work and have comprehended the feelings you've wanted to convey?

RD: I don't know if I've always conveyed my feelings.

CL: Are you misunderstood?

RD: No.

JENNIE LEA KNIGHT



Born Washington, D.C., March 31, 1933.
 Studied Kingsmith School of Creative Arts, Washington, D.C., 1947-1948.
 Studied Institute of Contemporary Arts, Washington, D.C., 1948-1951.
 Studied American University, Washington, D.C., 1953-1957.
 Co-founder and co-director of the Studio Gallery, Alexandria, Virginia, 1954-1964.
 Photographer and illustrator at National Institutes of Mental Health, 1954-1974.
 Cast bronze at Penland School, Spruce Pine, North Carolina, 1964-1965.
 Cast bronze in Fonderia Battaglia, Milan, Italy, 1966.
 Instructor in painting at The Art League of Northern Virginia, 1970-1976.
 Deputy Director and Chief of Installation for American Pavilion, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy, 1972.

SELECTED INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS

Alexandria, Virginia, Studio Gallery, October 1957.
 Alexandria, Virginia, Studio Gallery, May 1960.
 Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University, 1961.
 Alexandria, Virginia, Studio Gallery, January 1962.
 Washington, D.C., Jefferson Place Gallery, December 8, 1963-January 2, 1964.
 McLean, Virginia, Emerson Gallery, March 1965.
 Washington, D.C., Jefferson Place Gallery, September 30-October 19, 1968.
 Washington, D.C., Jefferson Place Gallery, September 1969.
 Richmond, Virginia, Handworkshop, March 7-March 27, 1971.
 Washington, D.C., The Phillips Collection, September 8-September 30, 1973.
 Washington, D.C., Catholic University, 1974.
 Alexandria, Virginia, The Art League, 1975.
 Washington, D.C., Diane Brown Gallery, October 11-October 29, 1977.
 Washington, D.C., Diane Brown Gallery, November 1-November 19, 1977.
 Washington, D.C., Diane Brown Gallery, January 9-February 3, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Diane Brown Gallery, November 3-November 29, 1979.
 San Francisco, California, Gallery Grace, November 7-December 1, 1979.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Washington, D.C., American University, Watkins Gallery, 1953-1957.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, Area Exhibitions, 1956-1965.
 Alexandria, Virginia, Studio Gallery, 1958-1966.
 Charlottesville, Virginia, Bayley Museum, University of Virginia, May 1959.
 Richmond, Virginia, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Regional Exhibition, Spring 1962.
 Richmond, Virginia, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Regional Exhibition, Spring 1964.
 Washington, D.C., Jefferson Place Gallery, 1965-1966.
 Washington, D.C., National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, "Small Sculpture," Art in Embassies Program, U.S. State Department, 1970.
 Edmonton, Canada, Edmonton Art Gallery, "Ten Washington Artists: 1950-1970," February 5-March 8, 1970.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "New Sculpture: Baltimore, Washington, Richmond," October 9-November 15, 1970.
 Frederick, Maryland, Hood College, "Washington Artists," February 1971.
 Washington, D.C., Jefferson Place Gallery, 1972.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "6 from Washington," April 19-April 28, 1972.
 New York City, 55 Mercer Street, "11 from Washington," September 8-September 20, 1973.
 Washington, D.C., Jefferson Place Gallery, July 18-August 31, 1974.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "19th Area Exhibition," October 12-November 10, 1974.
 Washington, D.C., Adams, Davidson Galleries, Inc., "Washington Invitational," November 1-December 7, 1974.
 Washington, D.C., Polo Gallery, 1976.
 Washington, D.C., Gallery 10 Ltd., "Wood," July 18-August 12, 1978.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "From the Women's Committee," March 21-April 22, 1979.

CLAIR LIST: When did you start collecting animals?

JENNIE LEA KNIGHT: It wasn't until World War II, when my father was in the Navy and we were stationed in Washington, and felt settled for the first time that I began to collect. I didn't have animals per se during my childhood as we moved too often.

CL: What did you collect first?

JLK: Dogs, cats, turtles, chickens, ducks and rabbits. We ended up in a subdivision backyard, and I raised anything I could get my hands on. My father retired at the end of the War, and so, we moved to a farm in Southern Maryland. Actually, it was one of those great old country farmhouses which had about thirteen rooms, and I had an apartment of my own.

CL: How old were you?

JLK: About twelve, thirteen—I ran wild in the woods. I went one year to high school there; it was a miserable experience—I just hated it. At the end of that first year my parents took me out of school and said they would give me a year off. I came to Washington supposedly for fun and games, and yet I attended the Kingsmith School of Creative Arts, which was an old Washington school.

CL: Did you draw or paint during your childhood?

JLK: Yes, when we bought the farm, the woman who owned it was freshly widowed. Her husband had been a romantic landscape painter, and the whole house was covered with his canvases. I was terribly interested in the work, and she asked me if I would like to have his easel and his paints; I was just delighted, and I constantly played with them. Also, because our house was so huge, my mother rented out the third floor. The man who moved in was a painter as well. I was fascinated by his work and would often think up excuses for going upstairs to look at his canvases. He found out that I had a predilection for painting, thus, on Saturday mornings we would have a formal art lesson. This was the only art training that I had, and when he left I stopped working.

CL: Tell me about the Kingsmith School of Creative Arts.

JLK: Dr. and Mrs. Kingsmith ran this finishing school for young ladies who didn't want to attend col-

lege but wanted "the finer things in life." At this time, it was staffed by a faculty who were not the least bit interested in a finishing school. I was way too young to be at the School—I was only thirteen years old—because it was for college-age students. However, my parents enrolled me, and I made the trip into D.C. on the Greyhound bus twice a week. I studied basic design, painting, and I even took several music courses—I absolutely loved it. At the end of the year the faculty announced that they were going to leave the Kingsmith School, get a building on their own and become the Institute of Contemporary Arts. They asked my parents if I could go with them full time; my parents assented and I did. I took a double major—painting and music; it was an incredible experience.

CL: Did you study sculpture?

JLK: There was no real Sculpture Department. Instead, there was a Ceramics Department, and we were all required to take one semester of ceramics. I studied with Alex Giampietro, who is still teaching today. I took the one required semester and learned how to throw on the wheel. The head of the Painting Department was an Englishman, Robin Bond, who was fresh from teaching at Summerhill and deep into Reichian therapy. The instruction, as you can imagine, was minimal. At the end of that year, 1949, Robin left the Institute—I think he was disgusted with the American mentality. He went to teach in Mexico, and Ken Noland took over his class.

CL: Did you think at that point that once you got out of school you would continue painting?

JLK: It was very strange, because, what I really wanted to do, the big thing in my life, had always been animals. You see, I led a schizophrenic existence in that I would wander the streets of Washington clutching my T. S. Eliot and my André Gide, feeling quite sophisticated. Then I would go home to the farm at night and on weekends and play with my ponies, and it all went straight out of my head.

CL: What would have happened if you walked into school with a painting of your horse?

JLK: God only knows. I never ever considered do-

ing that because there was one way and only one way—that abstract style was called the Washington Color School.

CL: Was there anyone teaching figurative painting, drawing or sculpture?

JLK: Not really. Ken did teach a life drawing class, which I attended, but I did not particularly like drawing from the figure.

CL: Why not?

JLK: Because I wasn't really interested in the figure.

CL: You mean, had they brought in an animal and posed the animal, you would have been happier?

JLK: I would have been far more interested. I also enjoyed painting still lifes because I could comprehend them. I could understand looking at something and making that transition from eye to hand. I just can't let something happen; I'm a visual person. It's amazing how long it took to get over that feeling, to realize that it was okay to be a visual person. This happened eons after I graduated from the Institute. I came away from the Institute with little formulas for how to make a painting, but that really had nothing to do with me as a person.

CL: After you graduated, did you stay in Washington or did you go back to the farm?

JLK: I was still living at home and had begun to teach children.

CL: Where were you teaching?

JLK: I taught art and music at a private day school, and I enjoyed it. I did keep my contact with the city, though, as I would come into Washington on a regular basis. Then, when I was fired from my job, I moved away from home and into a carriage house on Connecticut Avenue. I wanted to get my hand back into the art scene, so I decided that summer to attend the Washington Workshop Center. I painted with Leon Berkowitz in the evening and knew both Ken Noland and Morris Louis. I decided I wanted more instruction so I took the entrance examinations for American University. I had to take them because I had no proof that I had studied anywhere.

CL: Why did you want to go to American University?

JLK: I felt that I needed to; I felt that I really wanted to. I wanted to make a stab at getting a legitimate degree.

CL: Did you finally take a sculpture course?

JLK: No, I didn't. I have never studied sculpture. I was taking painting with Robert Gates and a materials and techniques class with William Calfee. This was the first time that I ever had the experience of communication with the faculty. I enjoyed Gates tremendously; he, of course, is terrific. Gates is one of those people that if you knew what question to ask, boy, would he ever give you an answer. And you could guarantee that whatever answer that he gave you was truth; I quickly recognized this. I think that he's probably one of the more important people in my background.

CL: Was it Gates who taught you about painting?

JLK: Yes, Gates taught me about painting, and Calfee taught me about art. Gates showed me that art was about being honest; it was not about making paintings. I left American University, without graduating, and I opened up the Studio Gallery in Alexandria; it was right across from Gates' studio. At this time, I was teaching seven classes a week, running the gallery, running a frame shop and working at NIH plus trying to do my art. Every once in a long while I would see Gates, and we would talk. One day I walked into his studio and began complaining about everything. Gates just sat there and listened until finally he turned around, looked at me, and said, "You know what's wrong with you?" And I said, "No, what?" He said, "You need to grow up. You need to decide whether you're going to be a painter or whether you're going to be a success." And that hit home; it has stayed with me ever since. I have made more decisions based on that one comment than any other in my whole life.

CL: I assume that being with Gates led you back to figurative painting.

JLK: Yes, because when I studied with him I worked either directly from still life or directly from the model.

CL: Were you comfortable once again?

JLK: Yes. I can remember the first painting that I ever did that felt right, and I did it in his class.

Both Gates and I recognized it at the same time. I did a painting that had absolutely nothing to do with what was going on in class—it was a very loose, bright red painting of two lions.

CL: When and how did you decide to try sculpture?

JLK: I used to carry a little hunk of wood in my pocket and whittle while my students were working because I couldn't hang over their shoulders all the time. I began to realize that whittling was similar in feeling to the lion painting that I had done in Gates' class; these little carvings felt very good. One day, I finally said to myself, "What are you interested in?" The element that I really found exciting was what happened inside the shape itself, not what was going on around it. Gradually, it began to dawn on me that perhaps I should be making sculpture instead of painting; but, it was very hard because I had the feeling that I was a quitter. I felt that I was giving up on the medium because I couldn't solve my problems with it; thus, it was very hard to stop painting.

CL: Did you stop abruptly?

JLK: No, there was a transition period in which I painted abstract, three-dimensional reliefs. Finally, though, I just quit painting and didn't take it up again until 1975.

CL: How many years did you abstain?

JLK: Eleven or twelve years.

CL: That's a long time. Was it difficult to begin painting again?

JLK: No, it was very, very simple. Even though I had stopped painting, I still drew all the time. Drawing is something that is absolutely necessary for me. I don't make sketches for my sculpture, I draw to see. Let me explain—when I look at something and don't know why I am attracted to it, I sit down and draw it. In the process of drawing I discover the basics, the real things that caught my eye in the first place. Perhaps it's the repetitive form of a number of trees or their vertical relationships to each other; I never translate these qualities directly to sculpture, but I do so in painting.

CL: Are you happy when you make your sculpture?

JLK: Yes. I like the physical part of making it and I

like the simplicity of the ideas behind it. I have a very clear idea of where I'm going when I do it or what the problem is when I do it. Sculpture has become a very simple, straightforward process for me.

CL: Is the process more important to you than the end product?

JLK: Yes, the process is the most valuable aspect of the experience. I start out with a hypothesis, and I wonder if it is possible. The only way that I can prove it is by producing a piece of sculpture.

CL: Did you agonize over your decision to start painting again?

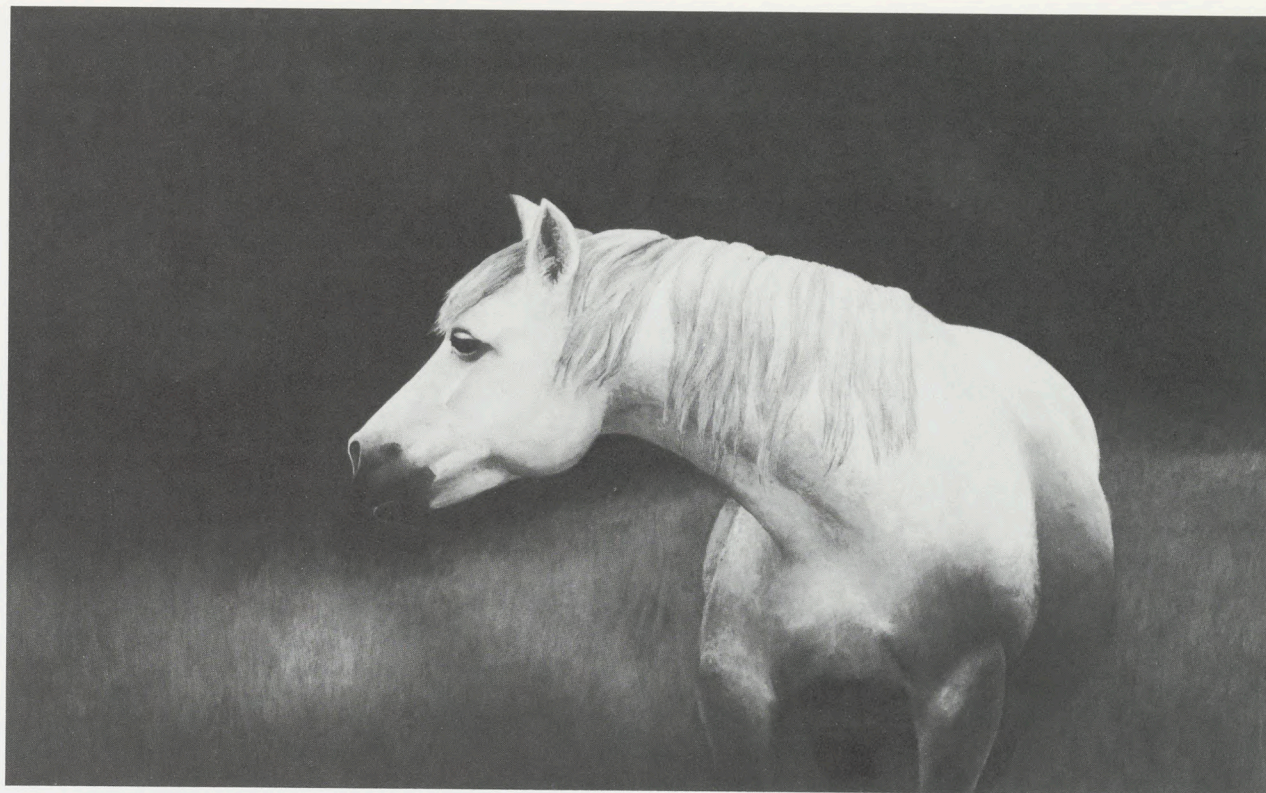
JLK: At some point in your life you have to look at yourself very coldly, and you have to recognize the fact that you are a failure. You're never going to do anything earth-shattering. You're not going to make that enormous contribution to painting or that enormous contribution to sculpture. Once you recognize these failings, what alternatives do you have? That's a pretty hard pill to swallow, but you can't stop what you're doing because that's what you are. So the question is, what are you going to do? My answer to that is there is only one legitimate thing to do, and that is make as personal a statement as possible.

CL: When did these feelings arise?

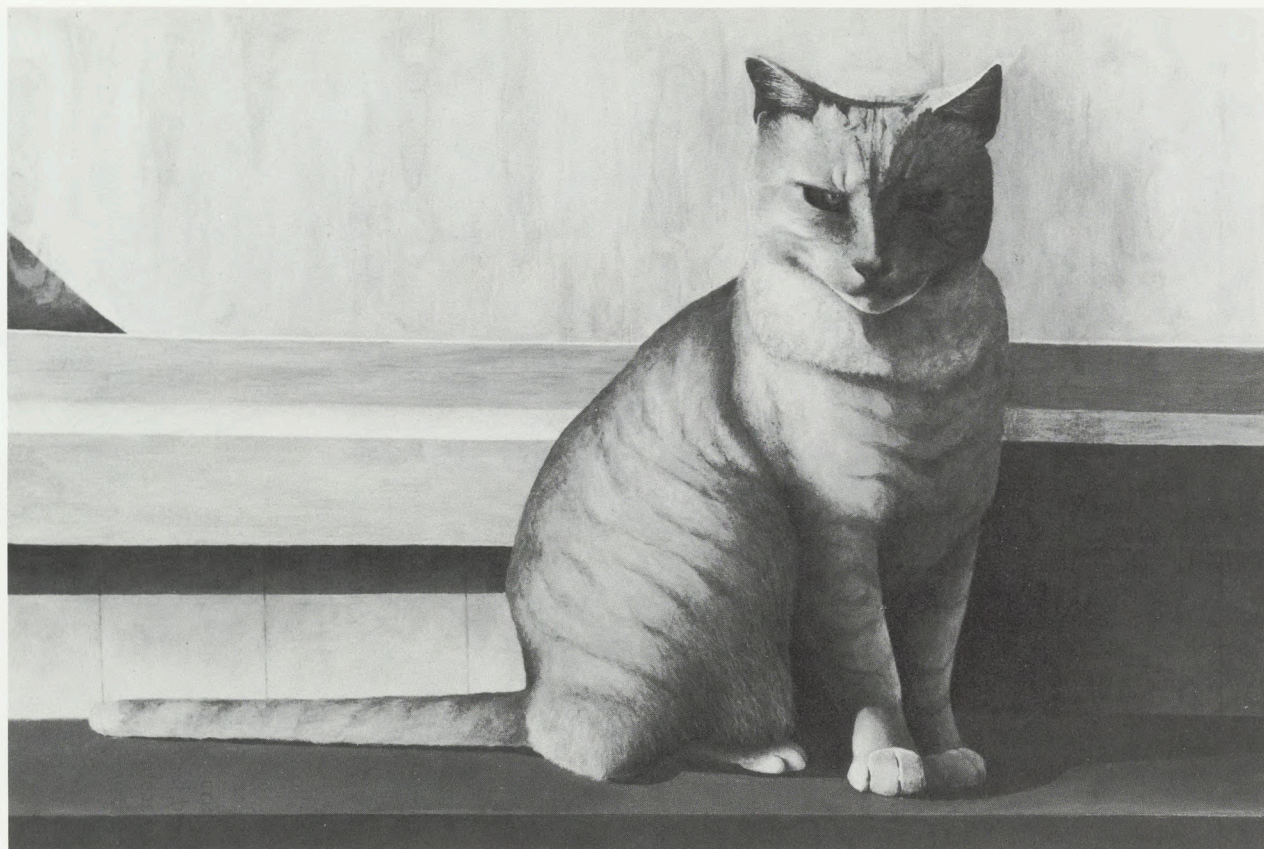
JLK: After I moved to the farm in Virginia there was a long period when I did not make a painting or a sculpture. As I was ready to return to my work, the studio burned down and that stopped me again. It gave me a long time to think about everything—my art, my life, my feelings—and when I started working once again, it was hard as hell.

CL: Did you start with sculpture or with painting?

JLK: I started back with sculpture, because, basically, I am a sculptor. I decided that when I started painting what I had to do was not to try to make a painting but to talk about those things that I knew better than anyone else; that is, the animals. I found that I had a tremendous amount to convey. I was feeling that there was something missing in the sculpture; it took me a while, but I finally figured out that there was something I could not say in sculp-



46. Jennie Lea Knight
Farnley Bounce. 1975
Collection Marcia E. Newell



49. Jennie Lea Knight
Charles on the Studio Steps. 1976
 Courtesy Diane Brown Gallery, Washington, D.C.

ture that could only be said in painting. I had been trying unsuccessfully to convey it in photographs.

CL: What were you trying to achieve?

JLK: I was trying to catch the intensity of the animals; the intensity of that particular moment, that particular animal and that particular situation. I could not be that specific with sculpture. The reason that I returned to painting was so I could accomplish what I could not achieve with photographs. I felt that I could only make the pieces more intense if I painted them. I picked up the paintbrush and said, "Okay, let's just have a go at it."

CL: Do you paint from the animal or from the photograph?

JLK: There is a very specific process involved. First, I go out and draw; I draw whatever looks interesting. In the course of drawing, I'll get interested in a certain aspect; maybe it's something that I've done a hundred times before. When I know what I want, I find the camera and take photographs until I feel that I've gotten the trick of the pen. I have the photographs developed, go through them and rigorously edit them. If there's one that exactly captures what I want, then I can paint. I do paint directly from the photograph; however, I eliminate and edit during the painting process. I only paint at night.

CL: Why do you paint at night?

JLK: It's a very personal thing; it's a quiet time, and I don't like to make noise in the evening.

CL: Is it difficult to paint these canvases because you are so personally involved?

JLK: No.

CL: Are you drained after you finish a piece?

JLK: No, no, just the opposite, it's a very relaxed process. It's so simple, the only criterion is to keep on painting until I have what I want, until the animal looks the way I see it.

CL: Do you see it not only as a reflection of your feelings for the animal but as shape, texture, color?

JLK: All of those things. Let me give you an example. This morning I was out feeding the animals, and suddenly I looked up and Charles, the

youngest cat, was sitting on the fence post. He had his back to the sun, and the verticalness of this cat and the verticalness of the fence and the way the light hit only the back of him was terrific. The whole visual effect was overwhelming.

CL: Can you describe one of your paintings for me?

JLK: I paint only what is stimulating to me. For instance, let me describe *Charles on the Studio Steps*. One day I was outside, and I saw Charles and I noticed the very formal way he was sitting—with his tail stuck straight out behind him—against the white door and grey steps of my studio. It all went together perfectly. I brought out the camera and took five or six photographs. I was fortunate in that one of them was exactly what I wanted.

CL: Do you draw the figures on the canvas with a pencil or do you paint them on?

JLK: No, I draw them; I outline the shapes before I apply the color.

CL: How do you apply your color?

JLK: Roughly on the first go round, and then they build and build growing deeper and deeper. After the first few layers of paint are applied, I find the color automatically gets thinner until it reaches the consistency of a glaze. There may be as many as thirty to forty layers of color before the painting is finally finished.

CL: Do you work on one canvas at a time or several?

JLK: I work on one painting until it is finished, and then I proceed to the next. I keep painting and reworking the over-glazes until I finally capture the quality of light that I want.

CL: Do you paint these just for yourself?

JLK: Yes, I do.

CL: Is that why you don't like to sell them?

JLK: It's harder to let go of the canvases than the sculpture.

CL: Because you're so deeply involved with these animals and it represents a very happy time for you?

JLK: Yes, I think that's true. There's also another quality; an important distinction between painting and sculpture. It's the time element involved in these canvases. This absolutely fas-



51. Jennie Lea Knight
Sonny's Heifer—Winter Grass. 1977
Courtesy Diane Brown Gallery, Washington, D.C.



53. Jennie Lea Knight
Emly. 1979
 Courtesy Diane Brown Gallery, Washington, D.C.

cinates me. When I take a photograph or I make a piece of sculpture, the piece always remains in the past. It documents something that has already happened.

CL: Is the same true with a painting?

JLK: Not really. You can say, this is the kind of light that I want to see on this cat; this is the amount of detail. Primarily it is the catching of light as it is reflected by time. With a piece of sculpture, this is not true. That piece of sculpture changes constantly; you cannot be as specific. That piece of sculpture is there; it's far more real than a painting. I can be far more demanding of my audience, too. I can say, this is what I want you to see; here it is.

CL: How do you get such a strong feeling in the painting?

JLK: I think through the process we were discussing earlier; namely, I don't stop working on them until I have achieved the intensity that I want. I keep painting until there is nothing more to say. I'm not really interested in how correct the cat looks or anything of that sort. I'm only interested in whether the feelings that I see when I look at the animal are evident in the painting. I could never capture this quality in the photographs; that's why the painting process suits my needs.

CL: Do you think that this intensity will continue? Do you see yourself painting these for a while?

JLK: Yes, because that's what I'm interested in. If I become interested in something else . . .

CL: Do you ever see yourself reducing them to the point where they become abstract?

JLK: No, I don't. I can see myself as not being as detailed, not being as careful with them. I can see myself producing them in a rougher manner with a more vital brush stroke because I'm beginning to feel that now. Physically, I love to use a brush; I like to see the mark of a brush. I can see this quality coming through in some of the later paintings. Particularly in *Emly*—in the foliage behind her. I really feel a need for that brush.

CL: Were you hurt by the fact that these paintings were more or less ignored when they were first exhibited? Was it devastating to you?

JLK: No, it was not upsetting to me; it was extremely interesting. In the first place, I was expecting a strange reaction to them because they are so different from my sculpture. People were terribly confused by them. One man even said, "I have looked at your sculpture for a number of years and I've enjoyed them, but what in the name of God are you doing with these paintings?" He was sincere about it; he wasn't being flip. I understood what he was saying—it is confusing. The only way that I can legitimately explain them is to say that I wanted something that was not available to me in sculpture. I feel perfectly justified in what I'm doing.



KEVIN MACDONALD



Born Washington, D.C., July 2, 1946.
 Studied Montgomery (Jr.) College, 1964-1966.
 Worked as Staff Assistant at The Phillips Collection, 1967-1977.
 Studied Corcoran School of Art, 1969.
 Studied George Washington University, Washington, D.C.; B.F.A., 1969.

SELECTED INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS

Washington, D.C., Studio Gallery, January 22-February 12, 1974.
 Takoma Park, Maryland, Montgomery College, September 26-October 25, 1977.
 Washington, D.C., Lunn Gallery/Graphics International Ltd., October 8-October 29, 1977.
 Washington, D.C., Lunn Gallery/Graphics International Ltd., March 31-April 25, 1979.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Davidson, North Carolina, Stowe Gallery, Davidson College, Davidson National Print and Drawing Competition, March 25-April 29, 1973.
 Washington, D.C., Octagon House/AIA, "Artists View Washington," April 2-April 28, 1974.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "19th Area Exhibition," October 12-November 10, 1974.
 Takoma Park, Maryland, Montgomery College, "Art Alumni Show," September 15-October 15, 1975.
 Washington, D.C., Washington Project for the Arts, "Drawings from Studios of D.C. Artists," October 21-November 15, 1975.
 Washington, D.C., Lunn Gallery/Graphics International Ltd., "Kevin MacDonald, James Sundquist," January 17-March 2, 1976.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "American Drawings from the Private Collections of Friends of the Corcoran," March 20-April 11, 1976.
 Davidson, North Carolina, Stowe Gallery, Davidson College, Davidson National Print and Drawing Competition, March 21-April 23, 1976.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, April 9-May 2, 1976.

Washington, D.C., Studio Gallery, "Great Bicentennial Rip-Off," June 8-July 3, 1976.
 Baltimore, Maryland, The Baltimore Museum of Art, "Maryland Biennial Exhibition," December 19, 1976-February 13, 1977.
 Rockville, Maryland, Montgomery College, Montgomery County Juried Art Show, March 29-April 20, 1977.
 Bethesda, Maryland, White Flint Mall, Government Services S & L, "Washington D.C. Printmakers," April 27-June 15, 1977.
 Washington, D.C., The Phillips Collection, "Drawings by Kevin MacDonald, Constance Costigan, and Natalie Alper," October 1-October 30, 1977.
 Denver, Colorado, Sebastian-Moore Gallery, "Hue and Image," June 6-July 10, 1978.
 Washington, D.C., Middendorf/Lane, "Washington Realists," September 10-October 20, 1978.
 New York City, Chuck Levitan Gallery, "Works on Paper," September 30-October 28, 1978.
 Bethesda, Maryland, White Flint Mall, Government Services S & L, "Drawings X 12," November 29, 1978-February 26, 1979.
 Baltimore, Maryland, The Baltimore Museum of Art, "The 1978 Maryland Exhibition," December 3, 1978-January 5, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "Washington Art on Paper: 1962-1978," January 23-March 18, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Local 1734, "Copyart D.C.," March 2-April 2, 1979.
 Annapolis, Maryland, Maryland Federation of Arts, "Art on Paper," March 3-March 29, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "From The Women's Committee," March 21-April 22, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Middendorf/Lane, "The Water Show," July 3-August 9, 1979.
 Baltimore, Maryland, The Arts Gallery, "15 Washington Artists: Works on Paper, Works in Clay," September 16-October 17, 1979.

CLAIR LIST: Was there anyone in your family who was the least bit artistic or who interested you in drawing?

KEVIN MACDONALD: Well, not artistic but supportive—that would be my mother. She offered me the opportunity to take lessons in art or music, and I made the choice to study art. I decided at about eight or nine years old that I wanted to be an artist; I always wanted to be an artist. But I didn't have any idea of what an artist was. It never dawned on me until I was in college; it was at Montgomery College that I really took an art course.

CL: When were you there?

KM: 1964 through 1966.

CL: Did you know at that time that you wanted to concentrate on drawing, or were you doing paintings as well?

KM: I was mainly painting, and taking all of the regular coursework.

CL: What kinds of paintings were you doing?

KM: My big discovery was Impressionism. I would dash outside with a bunch of paints and splash them all over the canvas.

CL: Did you create any sculpture?

KM: I have never been able to think three dimensionally. If I made any sculpture it was just as a class exercise.

CL: Did any of your teachers at Montgomery College have a great influence on you?

KM: Yes, Gloria Monterio did. Mostly because she gave me tremendous moral support.

CL: What happened when you finished college?

KM: I went to George Washington University—that was when George Washington and the Corcoran School of Art had combined departments—and I studied under James Twitty. I would come to class and paint but it was very discouraging. I finally decided I'd stop trying so hard to be an artist and just paint what I wanted. I used to pass these brick houses every day and they fascinated me so I decided to paint them. I considered this a minor breakthrough.

CL: Why?

KM: It changed my whole direction because I started concentrating on painting and drawing

architectural motifs. My work became more representational.

CL: Were you as happy doing the drawings as you were doing the paintings?

KM: Actually, I was happier with the drawings.

CL: Then why didn't you just give up the painting?

KM: I did eventually.

CL: Why did it take so long?

KM: I don't know. I assumed that because I was an artist, I had to paint, so I just continued. Unfortunately, I wasn't very successful at it. It wasn't until I got on very firm ground with the drawings that I had the courage to stop painting altogether.

CL: Do you think you will ever go back to it?

KM: There is a possibility. It would be very difficult for me to do it now because I would almost have to relearn the whole technique. But I might in some way go back.

CL: When did you switch to pencil drawings?

KM: I saw an exhibition of Michael Clark's at the Corcoran Gallery in 1971, which consisted of pencil drawings of buildings. Basically, that show inspired me to start using pencils.

CL: When you started to use pencil were you still doing architectural motifs?

KM: I had switched to interiors; that is, windows, corners of rooms, etc. This first series was awful; perspective lines coming out all over the place with representational drawing in the center somewhere. I finally dropped that.

CL: Were these imaginary rooms?

KM: Some were made up and some were done from different rooms I had previously seen.

CL: What's the dating of this?

KM: This would be 1971-72. I think by 1972 I was actually doing drawings that were straight interiors of rooms.

CL: How did you get to them?

KM: Natural inclination—I've always liked rooms. Again, they are architectural motifs. I love walking around the city seeing buildings and then going into buildings, especially abandoned buildings.

CL: When you walk around, do you make sketches?

KM: Yes, I make sketches, or take photographs, and

I also draw from memory. It's always been a combination of things. Mostly, though, the end result depends on my conflict with the drawing itself.

CL: What do you mean?

KM: In other words, I might start out with an idea; an idea induced by a photograph, sketch or my memory of a place. I make a drawing out of that—that being something real like a photograph or something much vaguer like a memory; I have to fight with the drawing, and the drawing starts going off in some direction at a certain stage. At that point, I have to leave everything else behind and just work with the drawing; I must fight it a little bit to try to keep it close to the vision that I have in mind.

CL: You mean you have a very generalized picture of what you want for the drawing and then, all of a sudden, it becomes terribly specific?

KM: In a sense, yes, although it's more a case where it goes from the specific to the general and then back to the specific.

CL: Are these bedrooms and restaurant booths specific places?

KM: No, that's not at all important. They most often are specific places that I have observed, or they are mental composites of places I've visited.

CL: Can you recall all of the specific elements of a chosen scene?

KM: No, I can't. What I recall is a certain sense that I have about the place.

CL: What makes one booth more appealing than another?

KM: The way I happen to see it at a particular time. In other words, there are a lot of different factors involved; I could return to the booth and not have the same feeling about it at all. It's the way it strikes me at a particular moment; I call that a vision. It's a matter of perception; it's an individualized perception.

CL: Are you drawn to the surrounding because you like the way that the bed is angled against the wall and/or the color and texture of the bedspread? Are these factors important?

KM: Yes, but it is not something I look for, it's something that usually hits me.

CL: What hits you first?

KM: It's an overall thing, it is not anything particular in the line of vision. It is the mood that is created by the sight.

CL: What kind of mood are we talking about? All of your drawings are terribly quiet yet unsettling; is that what differentiates the scene for you?

KM: Yes, but I achieve those moods by working with the piece as well. It starts with seeing it; actually, I describe it as being surrealistic.

CL: Do you feel that you are in tune with what the Surrealists were trying to capture?

KM: I might be a little bit off in terms of definition, but I think of it as being surrealistic in a more general sense; our sense of reality is an arbitrary sort of thing anyway. Questions of what reality is are relative. There are shifting levels of reality—dream states, altered states of consciousness. In order to exist, we must create for ourselves a mental perception of what reality is. For example, Susan Sontag has written that to possess the world in the form of images is to explain or define the irreality of the world rather than to actually explain the reality of the world. I am going through this unreal world and seeing things in an ordinary, mediocre way. Then things will hit me.

CL: You mean you find your image and then you free associate with it?

KM: Oh, no, not at all, because the images actually come to me. It's not that I'm looking for them. I'll be walking down the street, or I'll be sitting in a bar . . .

CL: And all of a sudden, something will hit you?

KM: Yes, and then I'll remember that what I'm seeing now is actually closer to what is real because it's not real. I'm seeing it differently than I would normally see it. And the fact that I do see it differently reminds me that what I am seeing is not actually there; it's all illusion anyway. It's not that I go around in a psychotic state thinking everything is an illusion!

CL: When you walk around, do you locate atmospheres and environments just as you depict them?

KM: Yes, once in a while I do.

CL: What happens to the people? Do you only walk down deserted streets?

KM: What happens is that I have a vision, and I try to capture it; I'll take a photograph or I'll make a sketch or I'll work from memory. When I get back to the studio, I have the problem of translating this image into a drawing. In order to capture the mood that I want I find it best to simplify all aspects of the piece. I'm not interested in people because they clutter the scene.

CL: Do the moods convey what you felt when you saw the scene or are they moods that you happen to be in when working on the drawing?

KM: The mood reflects my feelings at the time I was observing the site. The mood that I am in when I'm doing the work has no bearing on the overall mood that emanates from the drawing. My own mood might affect my work that day, but it doesn't express itself directly.

CL: How did you arrive at this quiet feeling?

KM: I can't explain that exactly. It is a natural tendency on my part, a natural preference. If any thing, I guess I was probably influenced by Edward Hopper, who is one of my arch heroes. His sense of quiet loneliness greatly appeals to me.

CL: Do the beds, chairs and booths substitute for actual human figures?

KM: Sure.

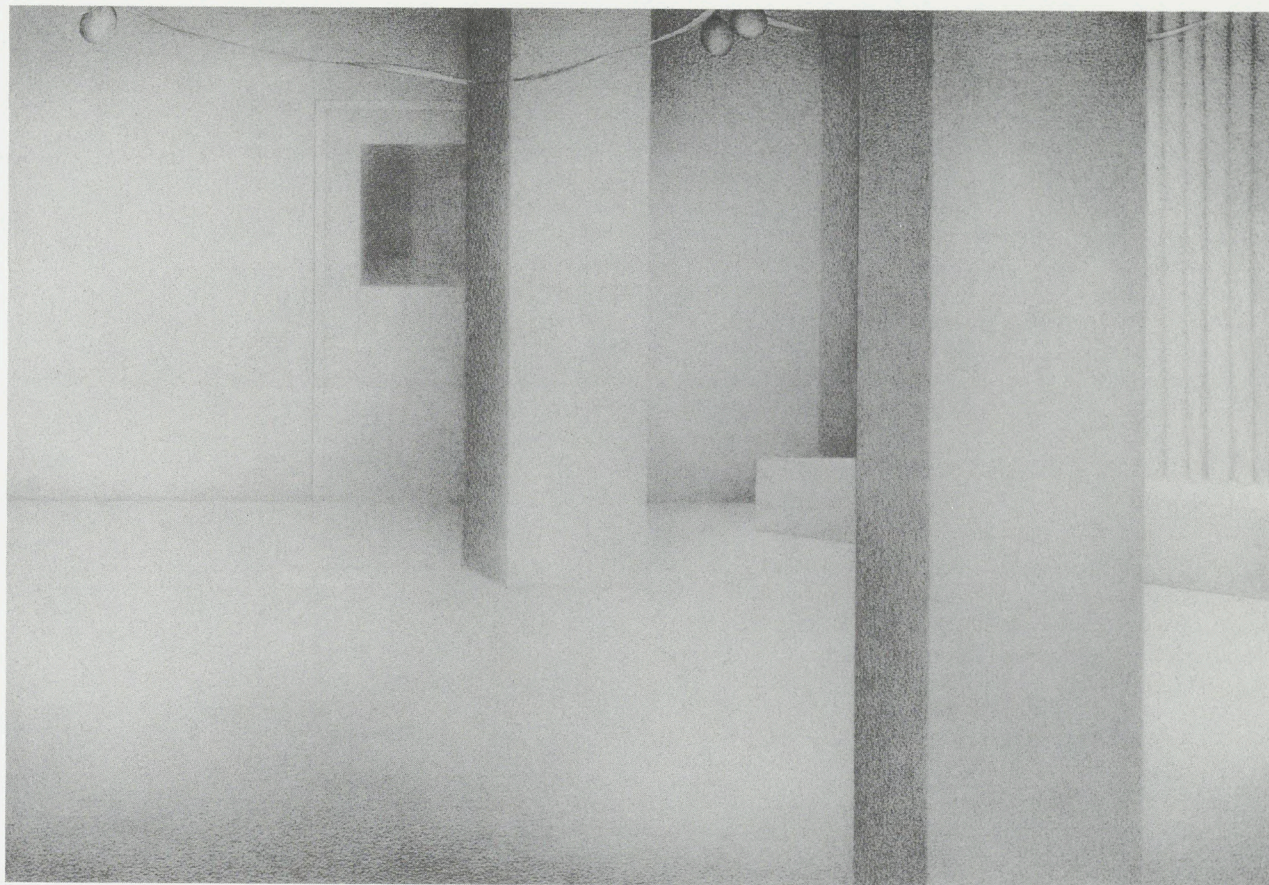
CL: Are you implying the people by depicting their environment?

KM: Right. It's you, alone, looking at something and you can imagine the whole context of the scene. You create the scene for yourself.

CL: Do you ever have to put the people in the scenes in your imagination in order to obtain a certain feeling?

KM: Mostly not, but there are some exceptions. The times I need to do it would be if I am drawing something which relates to some kind of human activity that is important to me. For example, something is going on in a particular room, and then I think in terms of human presence, my own or someone else's in that room. That becomes part of the mood I was talking about earlier. But for the most part, no, it's such a highly personal sort of thing; it's my own perspective. When viewers come to look at the drawing, it's an entirely different matter. I've no control over that at all.

- CL: Tell me about the importance of light in your pieces.
- KM: From the very beginning, I did drawings of interiors consisting of a window with light streaming into the room. I first worked with natural light.
- CL: Was that difficult?
- KM: Yes and no. Difficult but fun. I don't know how I would have done it any other way to make it easier. As I started putting color in the drawings . . .
- CL: When was that?
- KM: Let's see, that would be about 1974. I had a show at the Studio Gallery in '74, and started working in color at about that time.
- CL: Were the drawings subtle at the beginning, or did you apply a lot of color?
- KM: Yes, they were very subtle at the beginning; I used two colors—blue and ochre.
- CL: Had the scenes begun to change?
- KM: At that time, everything in the show really was all the same—the interiors with light coming through the window. Some had a little bit of color in them.
- CL: Was it difficult to begin to add color?
- KM: Not the way I did it.
- CL: Because you added so little?
- KM: Yes. The first drawing that I put a lot of color in was *Millie and Al's*, 1974. I was sitting in a booth in a bar over on 18th Street, and I looked out through the window and I made a sketch of it. I returned to my studio and made a complete color drawing. That was two steps forward—then, I took one step backwards.
- CL: Did you eliminate some of the color?
- KM: Yes, I eliminated the amount of color and reverted to a gradual increase. That summer I used what I thought was a lot of color. They were dark, somber colors but they were thinly applied.
- CL: Didn't that help to add to the mood of the piece?
- KM: Probably, yes, but I tend toward grays anyway. Plus, I put graphite on top of it all.



55. Kevin MacDonald
8th Grade Dance. 1975
 Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.;
 Gift of The Women's Committee of the Corcoran
 Gallery of Art



59. Kevin MacDonald
Metrobus. 1976
 Collection Dale and Frank Loy

CL: Could you explain your process? Did you learn this process in school or did you come to it by way of experimentation?

KM: By experimentation, but there really are no secrets. I use ordinary colored pencils, and I am very patient in my application. I smear the color around in the initial stages so that it will work into the paper; this gives the drawing a smoother tone.

CL: With what do you smear it?

KM: A piece of napkin.

CL: Do you make a preliminary sketch on the paper?

KM: Yes, in light pencil. I work from light to dark—you have to do that. And there can be little or no erasing.

CL: What happens if you make a mistake?

KM: It depends on where and at what stage I make it.

CL: At what point do you start applying color?

KM: Immediately. Each area is composed of layers and layers of color. Sometimes various colors—for instance, some skies will have four or five different colors of blue. Each color may have two or three layers applied to it. I work on it until I get something I like. There is always the option of coming back and making it darker. The final stage consists of adding graphite on top of the color. I do this with a lead pencil and this gives me the gradation of light and shadow although some control is exercised with the colored pencil.

CL: If everything is so very well worked out, are there any surprises left?

KM: Sometimes when I am mixing colors and I think I'm working very dark, I work on another area, and all of a sudden, I look at the drawing and realize that it is, in fact, very light. Actually, it has a very nice light to it—it's subtler and more graceful. That's a surprise in a sense. At that point, I start working around that area differently than I originally intended to do a day or two before when I began. Then, of course, there's the kind of surprise at the end when I look at the drawing and say: "It's not what I intended but I'm extremely pleased with it."

- CL: Are the drawings depicting scenes where people have been or are they still to arrive?
- KM: No, there is no sense of time; there is no linearity. There's no beginning or end; there is no story.
- CL: But it makes you think of so many things.
- KM: Sure, that's good. You can make all kinds of assumptions. The viewer can create his or her own story.
- CL: If the drawings are timeless and placeless, then, why make a title as specific as New Orleans or Silver Spring or Cincinnati?
- KM: My titles are completely arbitrary.
- CL: Is there no sentimentality in the work?
- KM: I try to avoid it as much as possible.
- CL: How do you work with photographs once you have returned to the studio?
- KM: Photographs have been quite helpful to me but first it was necessary for me to learn how to edit the photographs; that is, to be able to make a drawing design from it. Most photographs are terribly cluttered and detailed and so they must be edited.
- CL: Does the scene still attract you even though there is so much clutter in it?
- KM: Yes, because I can see through it. I mentally edit the place—I only observe the basics.
- CL: Do you work from one photograph or several?
- KM: It varies, sometimes one, sometimes a composite. Often there's an aid in looking at a photograph as far as presenting the details that you do want to convey.
- CL: Do you start drawing and then look at the photograph or do you look at the photograph, work it out and then begin?
- KM: I forget the photograph after a certain point, and I just draw.
- CL: Are the colors accurate to the scene?
- KM: No, I use only what I want. I also change the light source; I have discovered that I can get a nice glow from the way the pencils are applied, and I *do* like that.
- CL: So you moved from natural light to artificial light?
- KM: Not artificial light, but the light can actually come right from a drawing.



63. Kevin MacDonald
The Club, 1978
 Collection Mrs. Frances MacDonald



67. Kevin MacDonald
Philodendron. 1979
 Collection Klaus D. Preilipper

- CL: What do you mean?
- KM: In other words, when I use these pencils I can create an illusion of light, a glow that emanates from the piece itself.
- CL: It often seems that your perspective looks all wrong. Is that possible?
- KM: It is! It's what I call a pre-Renaissance perspective.
- CL: Are there certain things that you could not draw? Are you open to anything?
- KM: Yes, I feel that I'm fairly open to all things. It's just that there are only certain things that interest me.
- CL: Do you enjoy doing these drawings, or is it agonizing, or even boring?
- KM: No, it is not boring work, but they are tedious; I have to force myself to continue to work. When I start a drawing, I feel that it is so far away from me that I go through incredible anxiety before the drawing is finished. I'm anxious; I want it to be finished. I'm impatient; despite the meticulousness, I'm very impatient. That's discipline, and I force myself to do it.
- CL: Do you work on one at a time?
- KM: Oh, yes, I've never been able to do anything until I've finished something else.
- CL: How long does it take you to do one of the drawings?
- KM: They vary—it used to be that I'd spend a week on a drawing; now, if I am working well and steadily, I can finish a piece in three or four days.
- CL: In 1974 when you began to add subtle coloring to your work, did you also begin to create a more complex design?
- KM: Yes, I think that's true; a lot of that had to do with courage. I wasn't quite as afraid as before and so my projects began to be larger and larger.
- CL: Are you as shy as these pieces project you to be?
- KM: I used to be terribly shy, but I'm not any more. I overcame that.
- CL: Has that correlated with the bolder techniques of the drawings? That is, as you have become more courageous so has your work?

KM: In a funny sort of way it might just be that, or vice versa. I have more confidence now; I am more sure of my ability as an artist.

CL: Have you ever viewed the drawings as an escape?

KM: No, I haven't, and I'm not sure why. In fact, I see my art as a possible salvation.

CL: What do you mean?

KM: In the sense that this is the way in which I can express myself.

CL: Do you think that's what compelled you to become an artist?

KM: No, I don't know what compelled me to become an artist. My philosophy is that being an artist is an obsession, a pure obsession. There is nothing you can do about it; it's uncontrollable. There are no pills you can take . . . nothing at all. And most artists have very strong egos that bolster them up, that make them continue.

CL: Do you need reinforcement and feedback?

KM: I think I probably do, everybody does. I work and feel better, that is, I am more confident, if I am getting what a friend of mine called "rhythm." But I have never doubted my work, not in the least. I have questioned the various processes I have gone through but basically I

have always thought that I have been going in the right direction.

CL: What are you doing now?

KM: Now is an interesting time for me because I've been working long enough that I can actually see a span of my work. I definitely think it has improved; I can also see a direction to it that I couldn't comprehend before.

CL: What sort of direction?

KM: I am not talking about the changes in the work, it's the similarities that I can see. That's what I mean by direction. In other words, it's not even a style, although maybe it is a style, but I can look back and observe my personal statement. This reinforces a direction in me, because I can see what aspects are continuous.

CL: Do you know where your work is going to lead you?

KM: Actually, I do. I don't know that I can explain it exactly, even though it is pretty clear to me.

CL: Is there an end to your direction?

KM: No, there's no end to it because it is something beyond one's life. I joined the path and I will go on for a little while, but the path will always continue. I simply helped to uncover it in some way.

JOE SHANNON



Born Lares, Puerto Rico, March 30, 1933.
 Moved to Washington, D.C., Fall 1933.
 Studied Corcoran School of Art, 1954.
 Studied Temple School of Art, Tucson, Arizona, 1955.
 Moved back to Washington, D.C.; worked at Smithsonian Institution, 1958.
 Worked as Assistant Chief of Graphics and Illustration at the Smithsonian Institution, 1969.
 Works as Chief of Exhibition and Design at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1975-present.

SELECTED INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS

Tucson, Arizona, Studio Gallery, 1955, 1956.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, November 22-December 28, 1969.
 New York City, Poindexter Gallery, January 9-February 4, 1971.
 Washington, D.C., Henri Gallery, May 9-May 29, 1971.
 New York City, Poindexter Gallery, April 15-May 11, 1972.
 New York City, Poindexter Gallery, March 5-March 30, 1974.
 New York City, Poindexter Gallery, May 11-June 5, 1976.
 Washington, D.C., Pyramid Galleries, Ltd., February 22-March 19, 1977.
 Bridgeport, Connecticut, Carlson Gallery, University of Bridgeport, September 10-October 8, 1978.
 Charlotte, North Carolina, Mint Museum, January 7-March 4, 1976. Traveled to: Norfolk, Virginia, Chrysler Museum, March 29-April 29, 1979.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Washington, D.C., National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, "Society of Washington Artists," 1966.
 McLean, Virginia, Emerson Gallery, "DeAnna-Shannon," June 1-June 30, 1972.
 Washington, D.C., Washington Gallery of Art, "Drawings and Small Works," February 17-March 17, 1973.
 Washington, D.C., National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution. "Divergent Representation: Five Contemporary Artists," June 15-September 3, 1973.

New York City, Wildenstein & Co., Inc., "Paintings from Midwestern University Collections," organized by the Committee on Institutional Cooperation, October 3-October 31, 1973.
 Washington, D.C., Art Barn Gallery, "Face to Face," October 23-November 25, 1973.
 Washington, D.C., Adams, Davidson Galleries, Inc., "Washington Invitational 1974," November 1-December 7, 1974.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "Washington Figurative Artists," December 15, 1973-January 20, 1974.
 Lincoln, Massachusetts, DeCordova Museum, "Candid Painting—American Genre 1950-1975," October 12-December 7, 1975.
 Rockville, Maryland, Montgomery College, "Invited Critic: Benjamin Forgey," February 9-February 25, 1976.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "Kennedy, Love, and Shannon," August 31-September 19, 1976.
 Austin, Texas, University of Texas at Austin, "New in the Seventies," August 21-September 25, 1977.
 Bethesda, Maryland, White Flint Mall, Government Services S & L, "Drawings x 12," November 29, 1978-February 26, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Women's National Democratic Club, "Art at High Noon," December 6, 1978-January 30, 1979.
 New York City, National Academy of Design, "154th Annual Exhibition," February 22-March 25, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "From the Women's Committee," March 21-April 22, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Middendorf/Lane, "Small Works," September 11-September 29, 1979.
 Baltimore, Maryland, The Arts Gallery, "The New American Still Life," October 21-November 14, 1979.

CLAIR LIST: Has psychoanalysis helped you in recognizing what is going on in your paintings?

JOE SHANNON: Yes, it has. Eventually, in analysis, everything comes to mind. That's why it is so prolonged. I've been in analysis about four years—a little over four years. It's helped me a great deal, but my paintings are reactive.

CL: Has it made the subject matter freer? Has it come easier?

JS: I fear no subject matter; that's part of the analysis.

CL: Did you ever?

JS: No, but at times I would feel that I was doing something wrong, that I was doing something to be shocking, just to be shocking, and not anything terribly substantial. I feel that my art is very raw. Sometimes my technique is very raw, very unfinished as well. I'm looking for direct, passionate sentiments.

CL: Did you always want to express such violent, passionate sentiments?

JS: Do you mean my social pictures?

CL: Yes.

JS: Some of them are quite angry and violent. It's like life; it's full of various things, but I happen to focus in on confrontations.

CL: Do you have any idea why?

JS: Yes, because I think it's like theater. It's very revelatory of human stresses, similar to the old existentialist notion of crisis.

CL: When you paint these pictures, is it an agonizing process?

JS: It has been, sometimes. I remember when I painted the shoe salesman series. Notions of my childhood, ideas about my own son, identifications of violent things that were occurring in America and occurring within myself were prevalent. Often when your personality has assembled itself, after you've grown into adulthood, things that come from the unconscious—that make you feel ill-at-ease, storms of anger—have usually occurred way back in your past.

CL: How did you decide to use the shoe salesman as subject matter?

JS: I used to be a shoe salesman.

CL: Are all the people in your canvases related to you?

JS: Yes, they're people I know, but not personally. They are all "types," people I see around me. I remember you commented on the policeman in *Flirting Prisoner*. You said he was like a "cop." And I said you'd seen him, and you had, because he's a cop like many, many cops you see in any major city. It's a type that would come up—he drinks a little bit too much when he's off the job; is occasionally very vicious and even militaristic when he's on the job. A little rosy from the booze; a little macho when he has the keys and the billy club and the gun strap. I try to use recognizable types. There is a phenomenon that can be documented in the history of art which states that artists who aren't in tune with current styles often will go back to their grandfathers. It's called the "grandfather theory." It's the business of going back to the source right beyond your current scene. I like to feel myself in a direct lineage to Titian, to the great painters that dealt with humanity in a very specified way, not in an abstracted minimal or

stylistically minimizing way. I always felt that if I wanted to paint, I had to be in that lineage or else I wouldn't do it at all. So I found social vignettes that were paintable, or possible for me; that's one thing that started being meaningful. In other words, my fancy has been to make the "machines" or history paintings for today. Instead of dealing with the Coronation of Napoleon or the Rape of the Sabines, I would deal with the confrontation between a black athlete and his manager.

CL: Did you always know that this is what motivated you?

JS: No. I wasn't always conscious of it. Let me add that there has always been this impulse by the younger generation to react to their forebears.

CL: Don't you have to deal with them? Don't you have to come to terms with Mondrian, Pollock and Reinhardt before you can rush to the canvas and paint?

JS: Only to reject them.

CL: Why can't you accept them and go on? Why do you have to reject them?

JS: Because they have no relevance.

CL: Do you appreciate them?

JS: I appreciate them in the sense that I understand their importance, but I don't appreciate them in any sense applicable to me. The people that are relevant to me might have died a few years ago.

CL: Such as?

JS: Such as Albert Marquet. To me he was the most recent of the modernist painters to die—he died in the 1940's—and he was probably the most important to me. I was thinking about some day writing my thoughts on Marquet and Matisse.

CL: Are you doing what you want to do?

JS: Getting closer all the time.

CL: In what way?

JS: I have an art that's based upon drawing and reactive figuration and my subject matter relies on reality.

CL: Tell me how you make a painting.

JS: I work differently at various times, but, basically, my method is this: I have an idea for a

painting and it has to do with some social vignette. Let me just say a quick thing about illustration. When Berenson wrote *Italian Renaissance* back in the turn of the century, he made much of illustration as being one of the building stones of good art. But he said it was lesser to the more formal values, especially those of composition, tactile values and color. Then, in the 1930's, he wrote another book, and he regretted saying that illustration had a lesser role. When he talks about illustration, of course, he's not talking about what's in the *Saturday Evening Post*; he's talking about those responsive revealed attitudes that the artist has towards the life he is living and how those human events are demonstrated by the artist. Anyway, I strongly wanted to use the word "illustrative" because it encompasses my notions about my present world and how I respond to it. I portray certain people and situations in which I fantasize, dramatize and reveal what these human beings, including myself, are doing. And, of course, it's a symbolic event rather than a real event; it illustrates my notion about the world. But, to continue—the way in which I develop a painting is to start with an idea.

- CL: Where do you get it? From your dreams, from analysis . . .
- JS: Let's take an example—*Aging Athlete with Donors*. It has a great deal to do with the 1960's, and the burgeoning of television athletics. Athletes started making a lot of money and taking a lot of painkilling drugs. If they broke their ankle, they would shoot up with painkilling drugs and immediately continue play. And, of course, they'd ruin themselves. I couldn't depict this in a way that Norman Rockwell would do or even Diane Arbus or by mere reportage, like a photographer. Instead I thought: How should the athlete be shown? How can I best present this phenomenon? The result was my recent canvas.
- CL: Do you think of ideas and write them down so that you won't forget them?
- JS: No. I have so many that I feel as if I'll never get to all the things I want to represent.
- CL: How long had you been thinking about portraying an athlete?
- JS: It had probably been percolating for years. But it was right there when I needed it.
- CL: How did you decide that in 1978, it was time for you to do this athlete?
- JS: Specifically, I probably can't tell you, except that I do have very strong notions that racism is one of the biggest issues in America today. If we can solve that problem, we'll be solving the majority of our problems. I wanted to capture this problem on canvas.
- CL: The United States has had such a situation for years and years. Why didn't you portray it twenty years ago?
- JS: I was doing other things. It seemed to me that there were more pressing subjects, such as Vietnam and personal relationships and so on. It is similar to what D. H. Lawrence said about Bertrand Russell: He stated that, "Here's a man that doesn't know how to deal with his brother"—(he was talking about his fellow man)—"in a personal way, and knows nothing about the great underbelly of human life, who dabbles in these causes and somehow thinks that he has the answers, and how can he?" But Lawrence always dealt with the interpersonal, regardless, as I feel I do. My projected series of *Hyattsville Lovers* is going to be concerned with the intimacies of life.
- CL: In your social paintings, you point up all the horrifying aspects of our lives. Do you ever propose solutions?
- JS: How can I? Are there any answers? You see, paintings don't have a duration; they're just a fleeting quick image. Solutions have duration; they have to be spelled out.
- CL: Why don't you come up with a solution?
- JS: I think in some of my genre pieces, I do. For instance, *Pete's Beer*—that is about a solution; it's a relatively happy painting.
- CL: Is it one of a few?
- JS: A lot of my genre paintings and all of the river views are happy.
- CL: Oh, that's true. So you really have all different sides to your art.
- JS: Right, I try to show the sweep of life and my response to it, and I think that's what good figurative painters are about.

- CL: Do you need to complete this cycle? Is it important for you to paint not only the bad, but the good aspects of life?
- JS: Yes, very important.
- CL: Do the still lifes and river pieces, which are pastoral, refresh you so that you can then paint another protest piece?
- JS: Yes, right. The still lifes are a good rest for me; I enjoy doing them because they don't take the kind of mental effort that the other paintings do. Neither do the portraits. The most challenging canvases that I do are the complicated, interacting social pictures.
- CL: How long does it usually take you to complete a social picture?
- JS: It depends on how much trouble I have with it.
- CL: Do you mean technical trouble or trouble in getting your point across?
- JS: Getting the point across and it also has to do with expression. It has to do with a real portraiture, not just visage making. They're specific people, that's what gives them their wallop. They're real types that you can recognize on the street.
- CL: Do you go out in the street and take photographs of people and use those faces?
- JS: I collect scrap, and I also use photographs and drawings. I'll get old magazines—I collect them—and I'll spend one night a month clipping them. I have a file drawer full of heads and figures. For instance, I had the idea of the athlete and I said, "What's the best way to show him?" Immediately, a belly came to mind. And so I started by making several drawings of my idea.
- CL: What came to mind first—Black or athlete?
- JS: Black; it was always the Black. I thought the athlete was a good way to show a Black in a stressful, nude situation—I mean, literally, in an exposed situation. At first, I didn't use a jock strap, but I thought it reinforced the athletic end of it. I made a bunch of drawings, and I finally came up with one that I thought was pretty good. Then I went to the magazine files and tried to find some figures that would fit the three images. But I couldn't find any that suited me, so I took a couple of Polaroids of myself and other people in those positions.

CL: How did you know what kind of positions you wanted?

JS: I made the drawings. Then I made another series of drawings that I use as scrap, I call it scrap—a commercial artist's term for references—in other words, I always work from references.

CL: Does this piece come from three or four different drawings or do you make one final drawing?

JS: One final drawing, and then it's done; on occasion, I'll do some studies, and then I start painting. The most important part is the drawing, the idea.

CL: Why isn't the athlete's face visible?

JS: I like the idea of silhouettes; it's as if he is in shadow. Formally, I think it makes a strong pattern.

CL: But wouldn't a specific face make it more powerful?

JS: It's possible. I think it varies from painting to painting. I think he's in shadow which connotes stress, yet his profile indicates no anguish. Maybe he doesn't know what's happening to him; he's in the dark.

CL: Who is the man on the right?

JS: He is the manager and a loudmouth. When I recently exhibited this painting at the Mint Museum in Charlotte, North Carolina, everyone was appalled.

CL: Were you surprised by the reviews in this day and age?

JS: Yes, I was really shocked by them.

CL: What did they say?

JS: They thought the work was pornographic.

CL: How do you feel about that?

JS: I think it is silly, but, I've had that kind of publicity before. A couple of Letters to the Editor were written when I had my first show at the Corcoran in 1969. It just shows a basic naiveté on the part of the viewer.

CL: Do you need positive reinforcement and feedback?

JS: Yes, but I don't get it that often. If I had needed alot, I would have stopped painting long ago.



74. Joe Shannon
La Source. 1972
Vincent Melzac Collection, Washington, D.C.



75. Joe Shannon
Geleda #2. 1974
 Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.;
 Gift of Elinor F. Poindexter

CL: If you're looking to confront and you get a review that says, "I'm shocked," doesn't that make you happy?

JS: No, because in that sense the work has been misread. In the first place, if a person brings an open heart, an open eye to the piece, he or she would see what I am trying to convey. There is nothing wrong with what I am saying in those pictures. I am concerned with visually expressing man's insensitivity to man and his potential impoliteness and cruelty. I think anything that is revelatory and truthful about life can be done in a painting.

CL: Does it shock you or upset you that you are capable of portraying such strange images?

JS: No, not anymore. It did; it used to scare the shit out of me, because I would think, "Oh my God, do I have a warped mind? Am I really that nuts?" We're on this ship of fools together and there's no act that's going to be shocking if you really think of humanity and not think of ethical or social sets.

CL: Why do you have to remind us of how horrible we actually can be? Isn't it an awful burden for you to take on?

JS: No, I feel liberated by it because I know I can do it; I feel that I can say anything. My *Hyattsville Lovers* will be similar—some people will think it's sheer pornography; but, I'm dealing with the subject of love. Love that might be aberrant and erotic; yet, it is still love.

CL: To you.

JS: No, it's love to everyone, and these people are experiencing it as love. It might be momentary or fleeting; it might be just feeling good, but, it's some type of human contact and response.

CL: Do you feel that you work in isolation?

JS: No, I really feel that things are rapidly changing; I feel like I'm part of a community.

CL: Did you feel this alliance when you started painting?

JS: No, not at all. I was genuinely isolated except for Pete DeAnna.

CL: Do you wish to be part of a movement? Do you need people around you?

JS: Oh, God, never! One of the aspects of my personality is that I reject a certain kind of

tutoring from people in that respect. If Pete DeAnna had been teaching in the schools I went to, I would have been at his feet, but, luckily, I met him later when I was in my twenties. When I first met him, I immediately submitted to his lessons, not that he was my teacher, but he was a good friend. Words that came from his mouth were like pearls, and I would look under the carpets and under the chairs to try to find them if I lost them because I respected him so much. He and I were a duo for years—we were the only people that could speak with each other.

CL: Was it difficult for you to be living and painting in Washington during the 1950's to 1960's?

JS: No, it was elevating and it titillated my ego to be a rebel.

CL: Were you at all popular? Were you exhibiting during this time?

JS: I showed a little—I had a couple of exhibitions out in Arizona, which were very successful, but that was Arizona. I had very little success in Washington.

CL: Did any other artists ever call you up and say, "Joe, I'd like to visit your studio and see what you're doing?"

JS: Oh, never. Or hardly ever.

CL: How did that feel?

JS: I felt very isolated. But I also felt that I was waging a winnable war because I knew that I was doing what was absolutely right for me.

CL: Did you sense that, stylistically, figuration would again be popular?

JS: I was convinced that figuration was right; but I wasn't totally sure that it would turn around in my lifetime. I still think that it won't come full circle for fifty years because there's been too much invested in the reductive style.

CL: Is painting ever boring?

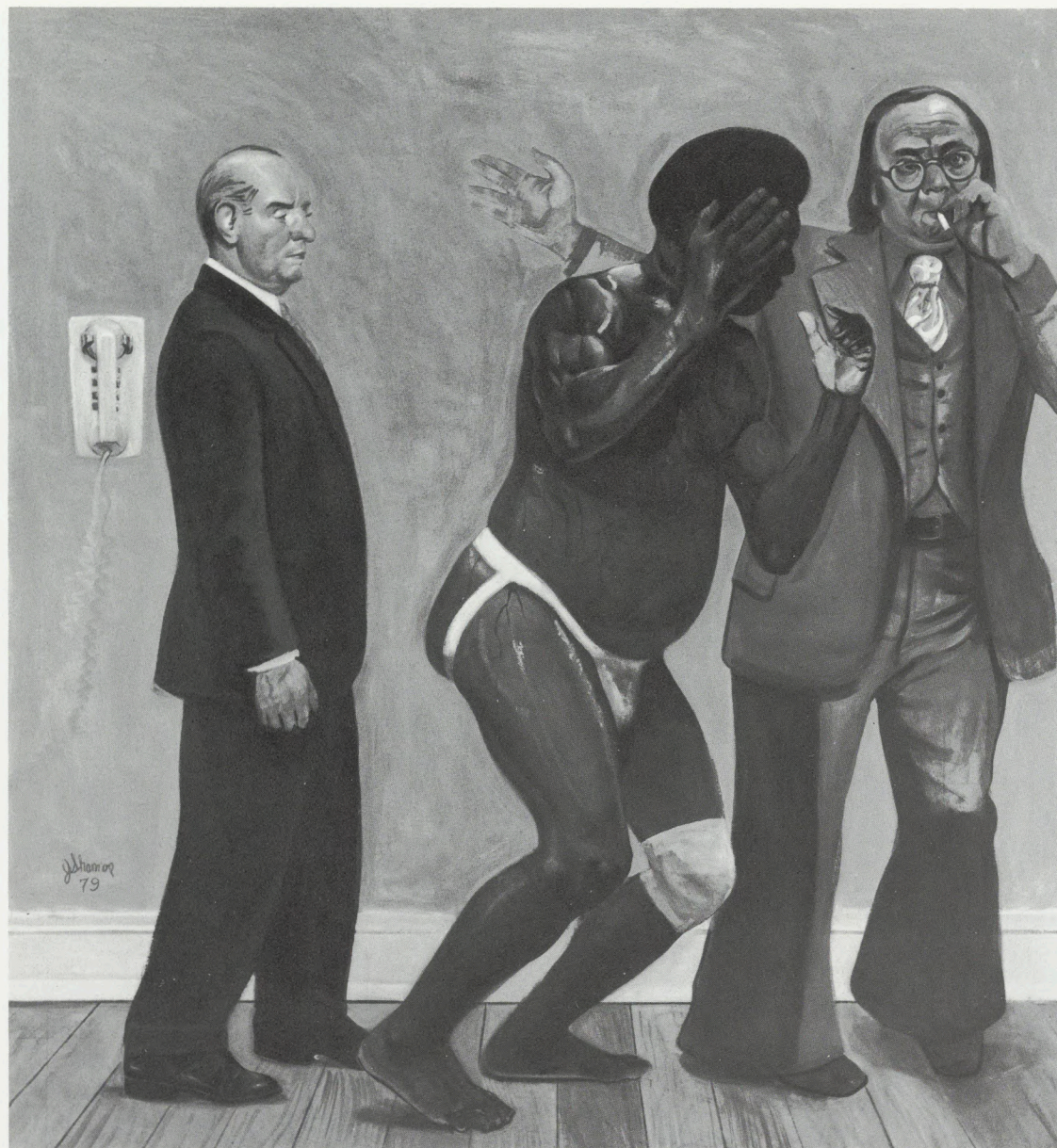
JS: God, no, it's very exciting. It's very exciting when you get down to painting because the medium itself is so active and alive.

CL: Do you paint for a long period of time or do you fidget around?

JS: No, I get right to it. My schedule—because I work at the Hirshhorn four days a week—consists of working three nights a week for as long



77. Joe Shannon
Hyattsville Suspension. 1977
 Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden,
 Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;
 Gift of Elinor Poindexter



78. Joe Shannon
Aging Athlete with Donors. 1979
 Courtesy Poindexter Gallery, New York City

as I can. I also paint all day Friday and Sunday. Usually my eyes fall out of their sockets because I'm so tired by the time I stop. I begin painting very quickly. I never work on the same thing for two consecutive days; if I have a social picture going, the next day I'll turn my attention to still life. Actually, I try to have three things going at once.

CL: Do you sit down and study the canvas at every step or only when you get to a certain point?

JS: There are usually problem points, points where some decisions have to be made if the piece isn't working right.

CL: How do you tell?

JS: My work is based upon drawing and often the thing most apt to go wrong in the painting is my drawing.

CL: Do you draw on the canvas?

JS: No, I usually put on an undercoat of earthtone and then I square up the canvas. I grid it off and then I draw in images with heavy pencils. I outline them and then I immediately start working with color. I recently started working in oils again.

CL: What were you using?

JS: Acrylics. They suited me in the early 1960's for some reason—I guess it was the speed of them, and the fact that they dry quickly.

CL: But this isn't spontaneous work, so why was the speed important?

JS: Because I liked the brushwork, and with acrylic, I could get a certain quality of brushwork. I felt that by painting this brushy way I was being modern.

CL: Your concession to Abstract Expressionism!

JS: Right, but not any longer.

CL: When did you stop feeling that need?

JS: One day some critic said, "Why are you doing that? Why the drips?" I said, "Well, I guess that's just to show that I'm working very fast." And he said, "Don't you think it's a little arbitrary?" I said, "Yes, it is." So I took some of the drips out. Constructive criticism never hurt any artist.

CL: How do you determine format?

JS: I like the square form, and I use it a lot. Also, I like the figures to be about five feet high; it's something in my mind's eye.

CL: Have you always painted fishing pictures?

JS: Fishing was among my first subjects. The pictures are a respite, a contrapuntal note to the intensity of the social pictures. I absolutely love to fish; it's one of my great releases, and I spend an awful lot of time and money doing it. I share Hemingway's notion that it can define your place in the world; it helps you fill up your space a little bit better.

CL: In the social paintings, are you trying to glorify the figures?

JS: No, you misunderstand.

CL: Are you trying to make us laugh at those individuals?

JS: No, no, just the opposite. I want you to have sympathy with them. I want you to understand their plight.

CL: That they have been taken advantage of or that they are not capable of helping themselves?

JS: It might have been their own doing. We bring these things on ourselves. We all sin and we all sin against others.

CL: Is that why you paint yourself in all of them, to make it more real to you?

JS: I witness a part of it.

CL: Is it like going to confession for you by depicting yourself?

JS: It's purgative. To me, the whole painting process is purgative.

CL: Is painting similar to analysis for you?

JS: No, it's very different. In painting, the creator has a tremendous advantage; you make your own world. If I'm a participant in these events it shows that I'm also potentially evil or potentially cruel.

CL: Do you expunge yourself of all guilt by portraying your figure?

JS: Yes, I think that there are multilevel meanings to these canvases; I'm aware of their multiplicity at the time I do them.

CL: What do you mean?

JS: The fact that I'm in there is a very conscious

act of expunging my responsibility or showing that I care by putting myself in the picture.

CL: Or to show that you, too, are a sinner?

JS: Yes, I, too, am a sinner and I, too, am sinned against. All those things. Also, I know that on an ego level, it gives me a sense of superiority that I can create a world in which I reign or in which I am superior.

CL: Are you ever the victim?

JS: Yes, I have been several times. It is probably the easiest thing for me to portray.

CL: I don't feel any better after viewing your social paintings. Am I supposed to?

JS: No, that comes from inside you.

CL: Am I supposed to get angry? What do you want the viewer to do?

JS: It's a matter of recognition, that is, recognizing that these situations are real.

CL: Are all of your pieces interrelated?

JS: Yes, many of them are interrelated. You will notice that the idea of people communicating prevails; I often use the telephone or microphone. The idea of people being witnesses and announcers is continuous.

CL: Do you try to bring a sense of mystery to the pieces?

JS: Yes, I am searching for a mystery and ambiguity similar in feeling to Piero della Francesca's *The Flagellation of Christ*. That painting consists of three nobles standing in the foreground with violent activity going on in the background. The indifference of the people in the foreground sets up tensions of ambiguity, illustrative ambiguity, in the sense that the viewer wonders why they aren't paying attention to what is going on. This obvious horrendous event occurring in the back does not even phase them; everyone is concerned with different elements. Many of my first pieces were just a maelstrom of indifference; no one cared what the hell was occurring beside them.

CL: Can you briefly explain *Geleda #2*?

JS: *Geleda #2* is another office painting; it reflects exaggerated fictional events which take place in an office. The man to the left is actually running from the scene in a hysterical but terribly heartbroken manner. Something very

important has been taken away from him as if he had been fired; in some way he has been castrated. The young Latin-looking man with an open shirt collar and ascot is talking into the microphone. He plays the role of the witness, but the indifferent witness—in this case, a rather stupid sports announcer type. The figure in the center is a middle-level boss. He's over life-size, by the way; he might be eight feet tall. He is holding the other guy by the ears—this is extremely exploitative. It looks as if he's hitting him, but, actually, he is twisting his ears. His pants are down, which could relate to the castration image as well. Anyway, the man is under duress—he's being used; he's being hurt; he's being crushed. These everyday office events are attenuated and dramatized.

CL: Do you expect the viewer to comprehend these elements?

JS: No, it doesn't matter, they'll get some of them. They'll get some of the angst. Again, sexual overtones are reinforced by the woman holding up her dress. And I am behind the woman looking zany and yet a part of it—not quite participatory yet perhaps wondering what's going on.

CL: How do you stop work on a piece?

JS: Finally, I just have to stop. I reach a point where I feel I can't do any more to it. I correct the aspects that I think I can correct.

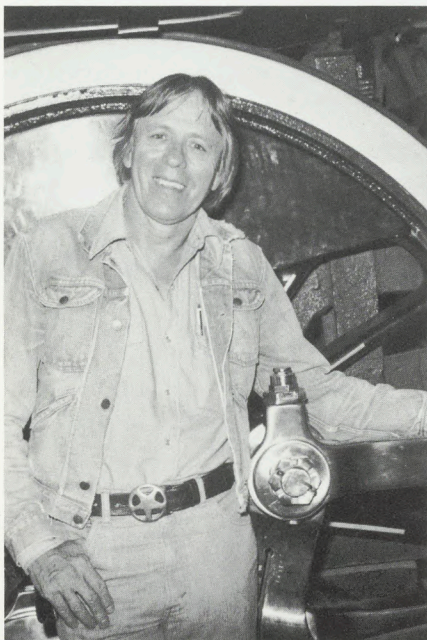
CL: Do you think that you or your art has become more placid? Is it still as powerful to you?

JS: No, I'll tell you what I've tried to do; I've tried to make it more objective. I think *Magician II* is as good as any painting I've done. When I look at that painting I get the feeling of a buzz of activity and the clattering of leather soles on an institutional floor. Time passing, morbid feelings . . .

CL: I find it terribly quiet and still.

JS: It is very quiet and very sad.

A. BROCKIE STEVENSON



Born Upper Moreland, Pennsylvania, September 24, 1919.
 Studied Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, on scholarship, 1940-41, 1946-1950.
 Artist-correspondent for U.S. Army, U.S.A.; Europe, 1941-1945.
 Studied The Barnes Foundation, Merion, Pennsylvania, 1946-1948.
 Studied Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, Maine, 1950.
 Taught The Art Center, Lima, Peru, 1952-1960.
 Taught Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, 1960-1962.
 Moved to Washington, D.C., Fall 1964.
 Teaches Corcoran School of Art, 1965-present:
 Associate Professor, Corcoran School of Art, 1971-present.
 Chairman of Drawing and Design Department, 1972-1977.
 Chairman of Drawing and Painting Department, 1977-present.

SELECTED INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1950.
 Lima, Peru, Instituto Cultural Peruano—Norteamericano, 1953.
 Lima, Peru, The Art Center, May 5-May 19, 1958.
 Lima, Peru, Asociacion Cultural Peruano Britanica, 1959.
 Lima, Peru, The Art Center, July 1-July 30, 1960.
 Washington, D.C., Mickelson Gallery, June 8-July 3, 1970.
 Washington, D.C., Pyramid Galleries Ltd., November 27, 1973-January 5, 1974.
 Annandale, Virginia, Northern Virginia Community College, May 13-June 14, 1974.
 Washington, D.C., Fendrick Gallery, April 25-May 20, 1978.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Paris, France, Musée Galliera, "American War Art," April 6-April 29, 1945.
 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, "Annual Exhibition of Watercolors and Prints," 1946-1949.
 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, "Annual Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture," 1948-1951.
 New York City, National Academy, American Watercolor Society, "Group Exhibition," 1951.
 Lima, Peru, Sociedad del Bellas Artes del Peru, Salon Nacional de Acuarelistas, 1953-1956.
 St. Louis, Missouri, City Art Museum, "Eighteenth Missouri Exhibition," 1961.
 Alexandria, Virginia, Lee Gallery, Group Exhibition, December 11, 1966-January 11, 1967.
 Potsdam, New York, Brainerd Hall, State University College at Potsdam, "Washington Art," February 26-March 24, 1971. Traveled to: Albany, New York, University Art Gallery, State University of New York at Albany, April 1-April 25, 1971.
 Columbia, South Carolina, Columbia Museum of Art, "Eight Washington Artists," November 3-December 3, 1971.
 Spokane, Washington, "Our Land, Our Sky, Our Water," EXPO '74, May 4-November 3, 1974.

CLAIR LIST: Do you think it would be helpful to start with a discussion about your childhood? Was anyone in your family artistic?

A. BROCKIE STEVENSON: Actually, my aunt was a portrait painter in Baltimore, and my grandfather, Howard Sill, was an architect. He designed The Baltimore Museum of Art.

CL: Were you very close to your grandfather? Do you feel that he inspired your obsession with painting houses?

ABS: No, I was just a small child when he died, and I only remember him as a very stern white-haired man with a white beard.

CL: When did you begin to paint?

ABS: I guess I have always painted. When I was a child, between the ages of twelve and fifteen, I used to construct model airplanes, and then I would make paintings of them.

CL: Did you ever take any painting courses in school?

ABS: Yes, when I was in high school, I was living in Philadelphia and enrolled in painting classes in The Settlement Music School and in the Graphic Sketch Club. In addition, I've always painted and drawn on my own. I had several friends who painted, and we used to go out to the country and paint every chance we got.

CL: Did you continue your art education?

ABS: The Settlement Music School sent me to the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts on a one-year scholarship.

CL: At what age?

ABS: Late teens or early twenties. At the Academy, I posed for the sculpture class in order to work off part of the one-year scholarship. But the scholarship was not renewed the following year, and, because it was 1941, I enlisted in the Army. I really feel that a lot of my training came from the Army; I continued to draw and paint all the time.

CL: Where did the Army send you?

ABS: I took a year of basic training in the Washington area and when I finished my training, I was asked to stay on and paint several murals depicting various aspects of the training. Lt. John Saccas, at Army headquarters in Washington, was organizing an art project, and he put

me on it right away. The Works Project Administration provided the money and equipment along with some assistance from the National Gallery of Art. The project involved Army artists from all over the country, painting murals of Army activities. I worked on these murals for about two years. After the project was finished, the Army sent me to Lexington, Kentucky, to learn engineering drafting.

CL: Did you have any free time to paint and draw?

ABS: At night and on weekends. I drew Southern Railway engines—the big green locomotives. It's funny, I painted them so freely then—I had no idea that I would paint them years later with hard edges and flat color. Also, I often hitchhiked out to the country to draw farms and landscapes.

CL: Did the Army ever send you to Europe?

ABS: I was sent to England in a convoy in 1943. I did many drawings during the two-week crossing. I drew everything: the ships in the convoy; the ocean; the men.

CL: Were they spontaneous sketches?

ABS: Yes, I made them very quickly. I had to do them on the spot, and I just enjoyed doing them. I worked in watercolors with pen and ink in little notebooks. These notebooks were convenient, and I could carry them around anywhere.

CL: Did you draw all the time?

ABS: I drew in my spare time and on official time; I drew anywhere. I am compulsive; I drew compulsively and I always have. So I drew and drew and drew.

CL: Then what happened?

ABS: I was asked to exhibit the series of sketches I had made on the convoy crossing the Atlantic at the American Red Cross Servicemen's Center in London. As a result of this one-man show, I was made an Army artist correspondent and transferred to the headquarters in charge of the invasion of France. I spent the following six months sketching and painting all kinds of activities for the invasion. When my job in England was finished, I was transferred to Paris—Office of the Chief Engineer. There I covered engineering activities on the Con-

tinent—France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany. Once again, I had to do quick, on-the-spot drawings—not in an office—no photographs. These drawings were done for newspapers as well as for official army records.

CL: Did you return to Philadelphia after the War?

ABS: I returned to Philadelphia and enrolled again, on the GI Bill, in the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. After a year, I won a European traveling scholarship, but instead, I was able to use the money to pay my way to South America.

CL: How did you choose South America at that time? Did you know anyone living there?

ABS: My instructor at the Academy, George Harding, persuaded me to study pre-Columbian art in Peru. He always believed in exploring new areas and said, "Go to South America; it's less conventional than Europe." So I did. I went for a year on the GI Bill and mailed my work to him every three months. He would review my work and send back critiques.

CL: Was it a good experience? Are you glad that you spent this time in South America?

ABS: Oh, yes, it was a very exciting experience for me.

CL: Then you came back to Philadelphia and went to the Academy again.

ABS: Right. I finished school in 1950 with the assistance of the GI Bill. The last year of school I taught night classes in commercial art at a public school. When the courses ended, I didn't have enough money to live on, so I got a job at a commercial art studio retouching photographs. I learned how to draw with a brush and to make straight lines with a ruler—techniques I still use today. I worked six months to get enough money together to spend the next year painting in Mexico. In 1953, I decided to return to Peru, remembering my good experiences there. It was quite different from what I had recalled—especially with almost no money. I was really stuck; I did some free-lance commercial work that allowed me to scrape by.

CL: Were you able to do your own work at this time?

ABS: Yes, I was able to continue my work. I was

still painting representationally, and I began to experiment with new media that I had learned about in Mexico. About six months later, I had a show of my watercolors at the Peruvian-American Cultural Society. I sold many of them and, from that time on, things started to improve. I moved out of where I was living and into a pension on the other side of town. Also, I started teaching private classes which kept me going for a while. I then started teaching on a regular basis at a private art school, The Art Center.

CL: What were you teaching, watercolor and drawing?

ABS: Watercolor, drawing, oil painting—you name it. And, meanwhile exhibiting in Lima. In '58-'59, the last two years I was in Peru, I didn't bother teaching; I gave it up and just painted. I went to the jungle and lived there for a number of months. I was attracted to the lush and exotic vegetation of the upper Amazon.

CL: How did you feel about your art?

ABS: Although I enjoyed some success in Lima, I felt that my paintings were not developing. Finally, there was a great chance for me to get back to the States. I accepted a teaching position for two years at Washington University in St. Louis.

CL: Did you know of Abstract Expressionism?

ABS: Yes, I subscribed to several art magazines while I was in Peru and knew about the movement.

CL: Did you ever try painting abstractly?

ABS: In my early years in art school, I tried both semi-abstract and abstract directions. However, I tilted more towards realism, I like this world in which I'm living. After my job at Washington University ended, I traveled to London where I experimented further with some semi-abstract compositions.

CL: Were you always thinking somewhat in abstract terms? I mean combining abstraction and realism?

ABS: Yes, though not to the extent I do now. I have always been interested in the division of space. For example, I found that the subway stations in London lent themselves to my way of working. I used the simple, strong rectangular forms

and broke them up with the graphics of the signs.

CL: Do you select the scene that you paint by how things are arranged?

ABS: I guess so, subconsciously. Many times that is what draws me to the scene in the first place.

CL: When you returned to America after your stay in England, were you still worried about your art?

ABS: Yes, the way it was going. I was frustrated; I didn't quite know what was wrong, but I wasn't completely satisfied.

CL: Did you think perhaps you needed more instruction or you needed to get to New York to see what was going on there?

ABS: No, not really. I thought that since I was on my own, I had to find my own personal style.

CL: You figured that you had to work through some of your problems.

ABS: Right, rather than look at other people. I was always sort of a loner. I never identified with big groups or movements; they never interested me that much.

CL: Did it bother you that you were not part of a group or that you were really on your own, doing what you wanted?

ABS: No. I didn't realize it then so much; I was too preoccupied with my own work.

CL: What motivated you to continue to paint if you were so miserable?

ABS: Painting was a major part of my life, and I knew that I had to keep painting. I was confident that I could find a way.

CL: When you returned from London, what did you do?

ABS: I went to California looking for a teaching job—up and down the Coast. I found nothing. Eventually I ended up in Maine, spending the summer with a friend. I went to an island and started some small drawings, but they didn't work. I came back to Rockland and bought some big paper and proceeded to make large drawings.

CL: Did you buy the paper on a whim?

ABS: Sort of. My friend had been creating large drawings at the time because he was a painter.

I thought, "Why not try larger paper?" I had been working on typewriter-size paper for years. I decided that larger paper might be less confining and better suit my needs.

CL: When did you come to Washington?

ABS: In the fall of 1964

CL: How did you choose Washington?

ABS: Well, I stopped in Philadelphia to visit friends from the Academy and realized that there was nothing there for me. I decided to continue on to Washington where I had some family.

CL: What was going on in Washington at that time?

ABS: I guess the Color School was, but I wasn't particularly aware of it.

CL: Weren't you ever in touch with any other artists?

ABS: No. I was new in the area and didn't know any of the local artists.

CL: Was it frustrating to know that here was this huge movement, the Washington Color School, and you were not a part of it?

ABS: No. That didn't interest me. Why should it?

CL: I was just wondering how you felt and if it was difficult being on the outside.

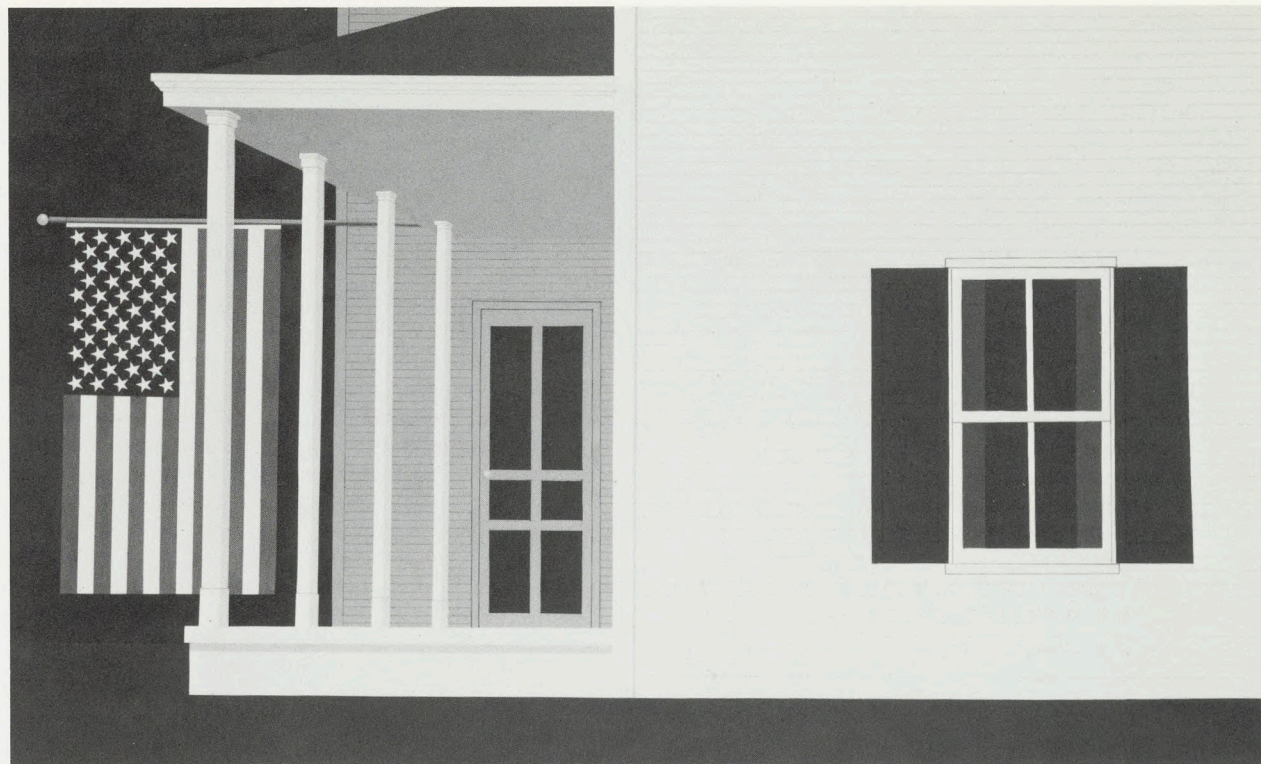
ABS: I know what you mean. Yes, it was difficult, and when I tried eventually to find a gallery it was terribly annoying and irritating to realize no one was interested in my work. But I was not about to quit because there was no interest. I knew I could survive on my own.

CL: When and how did you begin teaching at the Corcoran School of Art?

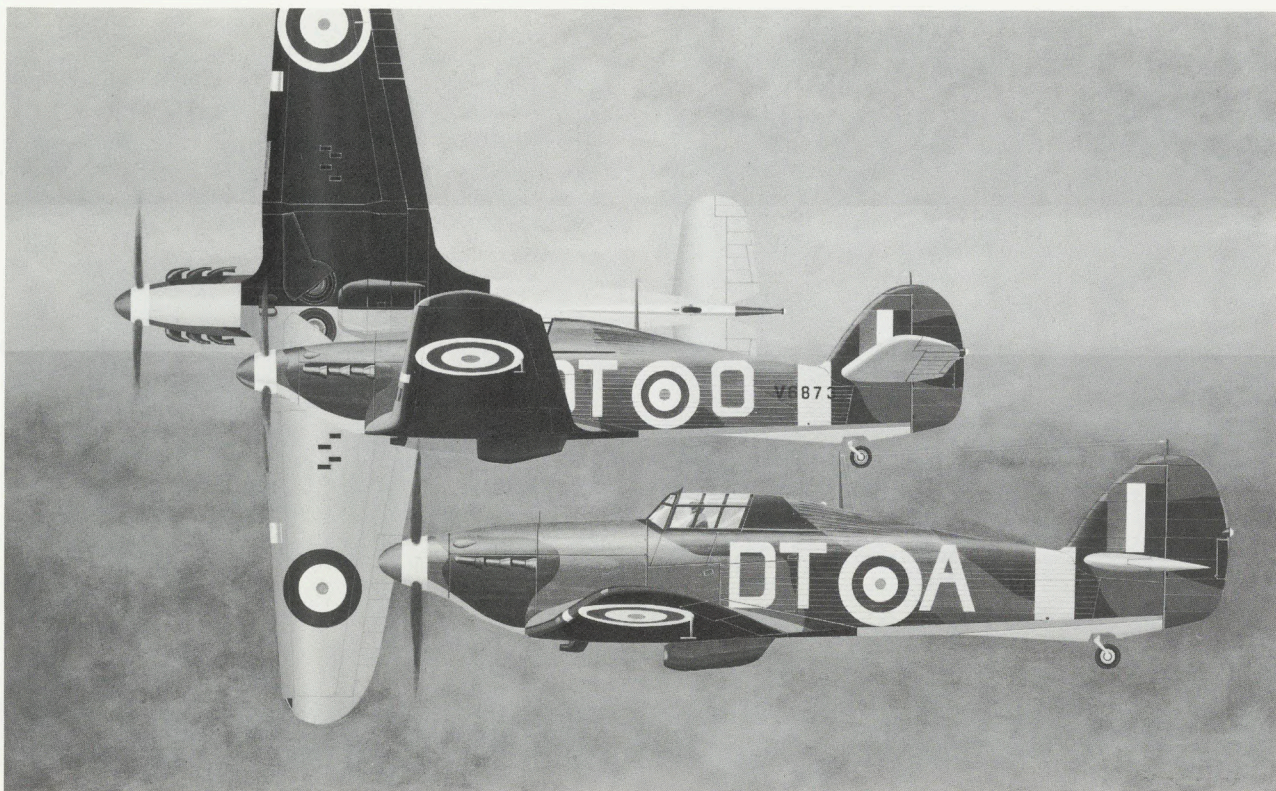
ABS: It was in January of 1964. I met Alex Russo—then Acting Dean of the School—at a New Year's Eve party. He saw some of my work that evening and asked if I would be interested in teaching painting and drawing at the Corcoran.

CL: Brockie, tell me how you arrived at your mature style.

ABS: I suppose Roy Slade, who later became Director of the Corcoran Gallery, helped me. He used to come over quite often to look at my work. One day, after a lengthy examination of all of my paintings and drawings he suggested, "Why don't you just concentrate on one or two objects in a painting? Get rid of all that clutter!" At this point, things started to gel.



80. A. Brockie Stevenson
Fourth of July. 1971
National Collection of Fine Arts,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;
Gift of The Woodward Foundation



81. A. Brockie Stevenson
Hawker Hurricanes of 257 Squadron. 1971-1972
 Collection Gordon Wilson

CL: Had you ever thought of zeroing in on one or two items?

ABS: Well, I guess eventually I would have arrived at it, but not as suddenly. I had been working in this direction since my paintings in London, but I was never 100% aware of it.

CL: And how was it? Were you pleased after the first painting?

ABS: I was pleased. I painted several more canvases and then concentrated on simpler compositions, starting with single houses—these were a departure, but they retained the texture and atmosphere of my earlier work. Gradually the paintings became simpler—more stylized—and within a couple of years I began to use masking tape to get harder edges—a concept borrowed from the Washington Color School.

CL: How do you use the tape?

ABS: I draw the outline of the house, tape it, paint the background and then retape it. This makes the lines super sharp. It is a very slow process because of the careful placement; as I have progressed, I have become more particular about the outcome. I have very high standards, and it just takes much more to please me now.

CL: When did you begin to use only Maine subjects?

ABS: After the original painting of the boat and house, I knew that I just wanted to stay with those subjects. I stuck with the familiar things that impressed me: parallel white clapboard lines; long horizontals broken and punctuated by dark verticals, such as posts or poles; and the brilliant light. I was also fascinated with the clarity and the clean, simple, strong design.

CL: Are they generalized statements? Are they ever of specific houses?

ABS: I begin with a specific house, but then I rearrange it.

CL: Can you give me an example?

ABS: *Yellow on Main Street* is an example. On the actual house, there is a staircase. This strong diagonal would have weakened the composition, so I left it out.

CL: Was it too "busy" with the railing?

ABS: Too much. And I pushed everything around to suit myself; but the painting still retains the flavor of the place.

- CL: If you compared the painting *Freedman's II* to a photograph of that area, would anyone be able to automatically recognize the scene?
- ABS: Yes, most people would. But they'd say, "My God, Freedman's has really been cleaned up!" I have arranged the elements and eliminated the unnecessary details.
- CL: Do you want the viewer to look at your canvases only from a technical and design standpoint? Or are you trying to bring across any kind of a mood? Or is it perhaps a mixture of both? In other words, what are you trying to convey?
- ABS: I want them to notice everything: the design, the clarity, and the mood. I want to get across the feeling of that place and the strength found there.
- CL: Would you ever paint an abstraction? Would you consider continuing the simplification and elimination process until the scene became totally abstract?
- ABS: No, I'm not interested—I want more than an abstract painting. I want the work to have meat on the bones, not just the bare bones. I want the work to have reality—life. I like these canvases, I like to look at them. They have all the structure of an abstract painting—and then some.
- CL: Do you intensify your colors? Do you add colors that really aren't there? How do you choose your colors?
- ABS: The colors are thought out as part of the design, but I don't consider myself a great colorist. The colors form light-dark patterns used to balance the canvas and to punctuate certain areas. For instance, in *John Bird Company*, I put a dark red building against a light, cream-colored sky. However, in *O'Hara's II*, I reversed the light-dark patterns and colors by using a deep blue sky in contrast with the white buildings.
- CL: Do you work from one drawing which you've done in Maine or do you put a bunch of them together?
- ABS: I spend about half a day on each drawing, and I'd say 90% of my paintings are based on these drawings. When I get back home, I start making studies from the drawings that left me with



85. A. Brockie Stevenson
O'Hara's II. 1975
 Private collection



88. A. Brockie Stevenson
Freedman's II. 1979
 Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.

the strongest impressions. I make many, many studies, changing the positions and relationships of each shape and form. It is then that I decide the proportion and scale of the painting.

CL: How do you choose the size of the canvas?

ABS: First of all, I have to be able to get the paintings out of my studio—that can be a problem since it's on the third floor! Seriously, I'm comfortable working in a large scale—but not huge. The exact proportions are dictated by the final studies. It is not until I've finished the study that I can start building the stretchers.

CL: Are you relieved when you finish a piece?

ABS: Yes, I am, it's a big relief. For instance, *Freedman's II* took me a whole year to paint.

CL: Why did it take so long?

ABS: Well, even after the studies, there are many more trials on the canvas. In the final analysis, each painting must be constructed to interlock every form. I reconsider every interval, every line and color. While it must work as a painting, it must really retain the essence and character of the subject. The final product has to be strong and solid—nothing superficial. Because of the absolute involvement, I can only work on one painting at a time. This is why I have such a limited production.

CL: How do you know when the paintings are finished?

ABS: I don't know, Clair. I keep looking at them until I get cross-eyed. Then I take them home with me so that I can live with them for a while to make sure that I don't want to rework them. I usually sit with them for about one month, sometimes two. I must know for sure that nothing can be changed—nothing can be shifted . . .

CL: And then do you say, "Okay, it's done. I don't want to see it anymore?"

ABS: Well, I would like to have them around but I can't keep them. I am attached to a large number of them.

CL: Why did you paint *Hawker Hurricanes of 257 Squadron*?

ABS: I love those planes, and I had always wanted to have a picture of them.

CL: Had you seen them during the War?

ABS: Yes, and I had also read quite a lot about them. I decided I wanted to paint three of them in various angles, as they were flying. First I made a model of the plane, researched it and made studies from blueprints so everything would be perfectly accurate. Then I painted the canvas.

CL: Was it hard to get away from the houses and concentrate on the airplane?

ABS: No, because the problems and the division of space, the design process and its simplification were the same. I knew the plane, like I know those houses, and I wanted to paint it very badly. I would not change the plane mechanically, but I did emphasize certain parts of it. I made a pattern of the planes by placing one next to the other.

CL: Returning to the houses, does the *Fourth of July* depict a scene in Maine?

ABS: Yes, in Maine people hang the American flag out all summer long. When someone asked me about the piece the other day, they said, "Are you trying to inspire nationalism and patriotism in the viewer?"

CL: Does that have anything to do with the painting?

ABS: No, I'm not interested in politics. I chose the flag for its design—it's color and balance. It is so beautiful against those houses, and it works very well. That's what it is; it has nothing to do with politics or anything else.

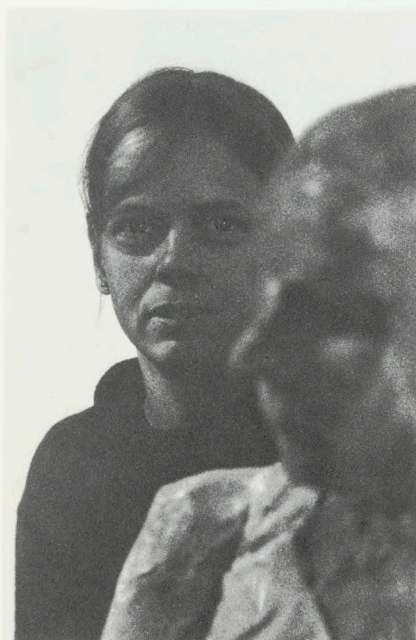
CL: Would you consider yourself a realist?

ABS: Not really. I don't know in what category I fit, because the paintings are combinations of abstraction and realism; an abstract pattern always underlies the reality of the scene.

CL: Do you ever walk around Washington and find buildings that appeal to you that you might want to paint?

ABS: No. I really love those Maine buildings. After I've searched so long, I've really found something. I just want to continue. I love the feeling of Maine.

GENNA WATSON



Born Baltimore, Maryland, March 10, 1948.
 Studied The Maryland Institute, College of Art, Baltimore, Maryland; B.F.A., 1970.
 Studied Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, 1971-1973.
 Studied University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin; M.F.A., 1976.
 Moved to Washington, D.C., 1977.

INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITION

Washington, D.C., Washington Project for the Arts, February 14-March 11, 1978.

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Baltimore, Maryland, The Baltimore Museum of Art, "1970 Maryland Annual," May 24-July 5, 1970.
 Baltimore, Maryland, The Baltimore Museum of Art, "1971 Maryland Annual," May 23-June 20, 1971.
 Baltimore, Maryland, Fells Point Gallery, Group Ceramics Exhibition, 1971.
 Baltimore, Maryland, Reed Street Gallery, Group Exhibition, 1971.
 Springfield, Missouri, Springfield Museum, "Midwestern Regional," 1973.

Madison, Wisconsin, "A Room of One's Own," January 1-January 30, 1976.
 Washington, D.C., Corcoran Gallery of Art, "21st Area Exhibition: Sculpture," October 14-November 26, 1978.
 Washington, D.C., Art Barn Gallery, "Second Annual Invitational Exhibit: Sculpture," January 3-January 28, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Washington Project for the Arts, "Contemporary Washington Artists," January 10-February 10, 1979.
 Rochester, New York, Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, "Uncommon Visions," May 4-June 24, 1979.
 Washington, D.C., Fendrick Gallery, "Contradictions," July 10-September 8, 1979.
 Charlottesville, Virginia, 2nd Street Gallery, Group Exhibition, February 12-March 23, 1979.
 Richmond, Virginia, Institute of Contemporary Art of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, "The Figure in Sculpture," October 10-November 14, 1979.

CLAIR LIST: When you attended art school, did you know that you wanted to work with sculpture or were you drawing at that time, or painting, or what?

GENNA WATSON: I think I knew I wanted to work with sculpture, but a class in the second half of my first year at the Maryland Institute reaffirmed this for me. I took the course with a very good woman, Stephanie Scuris, a little Greek woman, who is still in Baltimore. She had a very hard time with English, but when she used her hands—she used her hands in all sorts of gestures—she could really get across what she meant.

CL: With what materials were you working?

GW: I was working with paper and wire and wax, making small wax figurines.

CL: Did you enjoy working with the wire at that time?

GW: Yes, I did. It all felt very preliminary, like little sketches; it told me something about myself.

CL: And then you continued your studies in sculpture?

GW: Yes, but I always took painting and drawing as well.

CL: Did you enjoy that?

GW: I enjoyed that a lot, but I'm not much at creating illusions in two dimensions. If you gave me a piece of paper and said, "draw," I wouldn't draw the human figure. I have no trouble at this point dealing with the human figure in sculptural terms, but two-dimensionally, I can't do it. I'd probably end up giving back a scribbled drawing and saying, "This is my drawing."

CL: Were you painting and drawing abstractly?

GW: No, I didn't know how to do any abstraction at that point.

CL: Were they teaching that at school?

GW: People further along in painting and drawing, of course, did it, but the classes that I took in painting dealt with the figure. I liked it, but that's when I discovered that I just couldn't create the illusions of three-dimensional painting because I didn't know anything about abstraction or painting abstractly myself. I had tried off and on, but it didn't work out; it was a dead end.

CL: Were you making figural sculpture when you were in school?

GW: Yes, I started in my Junior year. I made them out of papier-mâché and chicken wire. I went through the possibility of trying to work with wax and polyester—but technically I was just a complete dope. However, I did learn about bronze casting at that time. I made some small figures reminiscent of Rodin. No one else was doing Rodin, so I felt, well, better leave that behind. I had other imagery in my mind in relation to the figure, and I had to find out a way to do it. I finally hit upon papier-mâché (brown craft paper dipped in a mixture of wheat paste and glue) over chicken wire. It's really easy for me to work with.

CL: Is *At Times* composed that way?

GW: Yes.

CL: And how did you come up with that figure?

GW: I made it the year after I graduated from the Institute. I remained in Baltimore, and I worked on it during that Fall and Winter.

CL: Did you have a studio in Baltimore at that time?

GW: Yes, I got a basement studio, and I made it there. I wasn't too much at peace with myself

at that time as far as being an artist. I was really scared that ideas might not come; I was horrified. If undergraduate school did anything for me, it terrified me into thinking that I might not continue to be an artist. Teachers repeatedly said, "The test of the true artist is if in ten years you are still making art, then you're an artist." Then they'd say, "Ninety percent don't do it." And you're going, "Oh, my God, oh, my God. It's going to make me stop being an artist." I was just in complete terror.

CL: Do you work on one piece at a time?

GW: Well, during that time I would usually begin one piece and finish it. Now I'll start working on two or three different pieces and then may even jump to a totally new sculpture. Once I get intensively involved with a piece though, a sequence begins—one thing leads to another. That flow of concentration is very nice once I get it started.

CL: Do you find that you have to work on your pieces for a long period of time rather than just coming in for two hours every day? Are there days when you have to spend twenty hours working?

GW: Four to five hours seems like a comfortable length of time. My favorite days are those that John Dickson, my husband, and I don't have to leave early to go to work.

CL: Do you work that whole time or do you work and then stop and walk around for a while?

GW: I work for a while, and then I stop, I walk around, I fix myself a cup of tea or get something to eat.

CL: So, you're not driven for the next six hours to just sit there and work?

GW: Sometimes I get pulled into it, and I don't want to stop working. Some days I have to stop and return to the piece later; otherwise I can burn myself out.

CL: Have you ever thought seriously about giving up your work?

GW: Oh, yes, that passed through my mind when I was between graduate schools. I went to two different graduate schools—Washington University in St. Louis and the University of Wisconsin—and I had a really rough time emo-

tionally. I was in therapy for quite a while, and I was thinking, "Do I really want to be an artist?" The enormity of going back to school when I was in my mid-twenties hit me, and I didn't know what I really wanted to do or what else I could do, and it just seemed to overwhelm me. I returned to school at the University of Wisconsin and started getting back into art.

CL: And then what happened?

GW: John Dickson and I had known each other previously, and we started writing letters, then seeing each other and discussing the possibility of a more permanent relationship. I finished my schooling in Wisconsin; we lived together a year, and then we got married. John had already been in Washington for the better part of a year in Rockne Krebs' and Sam Gilliam's workshop program. He wanted to come back here very badly because he had started things. I didn't especially want to remain in Madison for the rest of my life because it was too cold—it felt like the top of the world—and so we moved.

CL: Had you ever considered moving to Washington before then or was it too close to home?

GW: By that time, after several years away, there were still fears within me, but a lot of them had vanished. I was beginning to feel homesick for the East Coast, and needed to be closer to my family. My parents were getting older, and every time I came back I could see that they had aged, and it would shake me up.

CL: Could you describe when and how you arrived at your present style?

GW: Okay. There was a period in St. Louis and again in Wisconsin when I couldn't stand to look at the figure anymore. All those hours of putting wet papier-mâché on the chicken wire had just gotten to me. It was a very bad time for me emotionally, and I went into therapy. My span of concentration was so short that I couldn't work hours and hours—two and three hours at the very most. I started creating different images in St. Louis. I didn't even know if they were art.

CL: So initially the figures were inspired by your therapy?

GW: No, I wouldn't say they were inspired by therapy. It was the time I was going through emotionally that changed my art rather than my therapy. Therapy has altered my art in that I have loosened up a lot in my work and have felt a greater freedom to experiment with a vast range of materials. I was exploring numerous things; I found out that there were different elements in art for me other than horrific imagery. Even though I was going through a terrible time at that point, it didn't come out in my art, amazingly enough. In fact, I enjoyed it. I was like a kid going to a sand box every day for a few hours and playing. I began to think about making figures again, but differently than before. I wanted to make figures out of different types of materials, like straw, string, paint, etc., and I thought to myself, "Because the figure is so much on my mind again, this must mean that I am ready to return to it." When I came to Washington, I started working with figures again, figures composed of all types of materials. For my first figure, I decided to rework a piece that I had stored at my parents' house. I felt that I had never fully developed it; it was just a figure and the imagery wasn't there. I said, "Okay, do whatever you want to, if you ruin it, you ruin it, so what." I just started working that way.

CL: And how about materials such as the tooth picks and the nails and the feathers? Were you always combining all of these different kinds of materials from the beginning?

GW: Yes, since I have been in Washington.

CL: Do you collect the materials yourself? How do you get them?

GW: I find them in secondhand shops, ten-cent stores, arts and crafts stores, art stores, etc.

CL: Do you glue them on?

GW: Yes, with Elmer's Glue and sometimes silicone glue. I have used materials just for their pure visual and sensual effects without any kind of imagery intended.

CL: Is it difficult to tell when your pieces are finished?

GW: Sometimes yes, sometimes no.

CL: Have you ever taken a sculpture and just

stopped for a while and thought it was finished and then continued to work on it?

GW: Oh, sure. Sometimes I've even exhibited pieces, then gotten them back a year later and said "Aha! Time to do something else to you!"

CL: Are the figures people whom you know, or are they imaginary people?

GW: They're made-up people. It would be interesting for me to do people whom I know; it would bring another dimension to my work.

CL: Do you find that they are frightening or beautiful? How would you describe your pieces?

GW: I know that they're frightening. At a certain point, though, they gain more beauty for me.

CL: Are they meant to frighten the viewer? I mean, is that one of the qualities for which you are striving?

GW: I think I used to, but now I am not even conscious of doing it. Now people react in a frightened way to my pieces, and I think it's more that they are reacting to my own feelings.

CL: What do you mean? What kind of feelings?

GW: I am aware that the figures represent some level of projection of my innermost feelings and that they are very personal.

CL: About what's going on around you, about people you know?

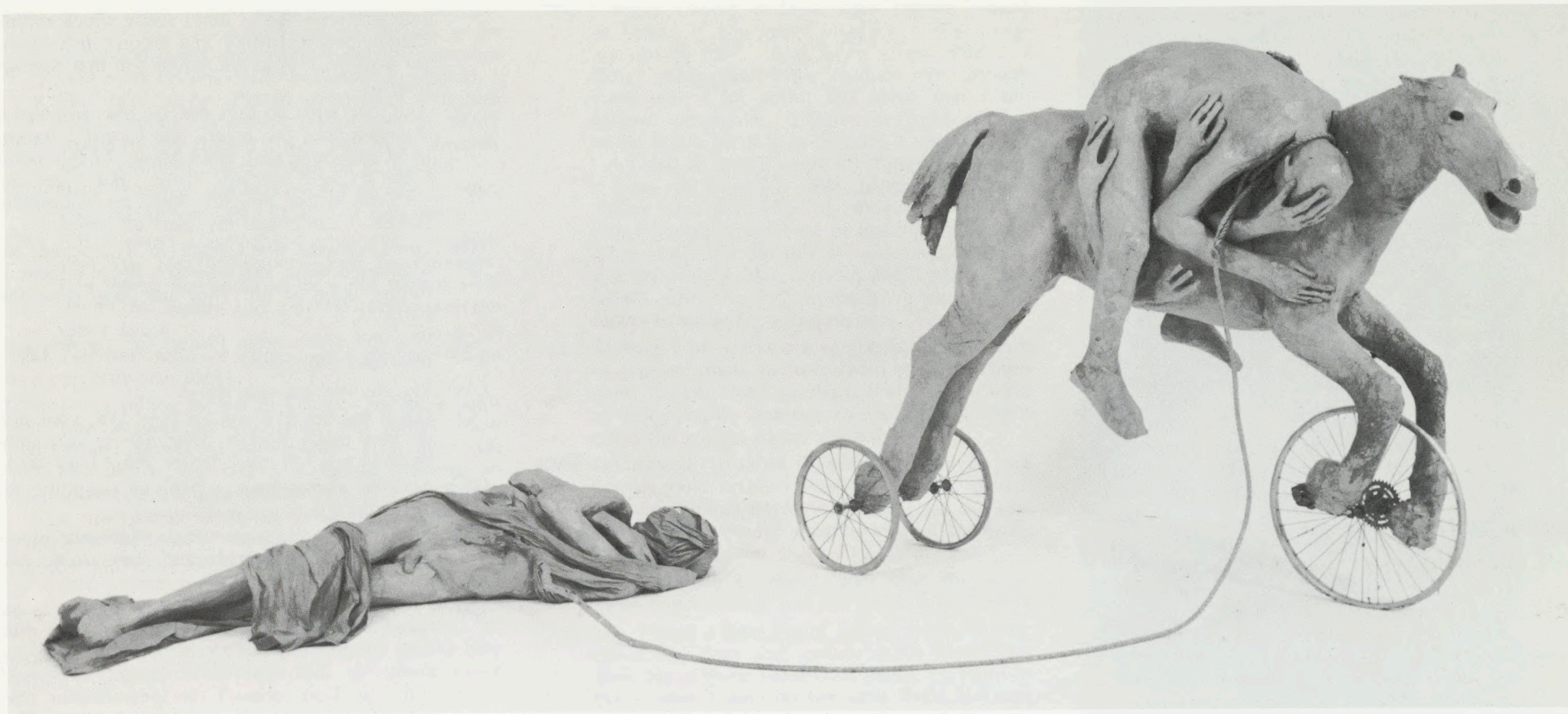
GW: Not about people I know, just a very personal interpretation of my feelings projected through these figures.

CL: And the feelings happen to come out as images that are figures?

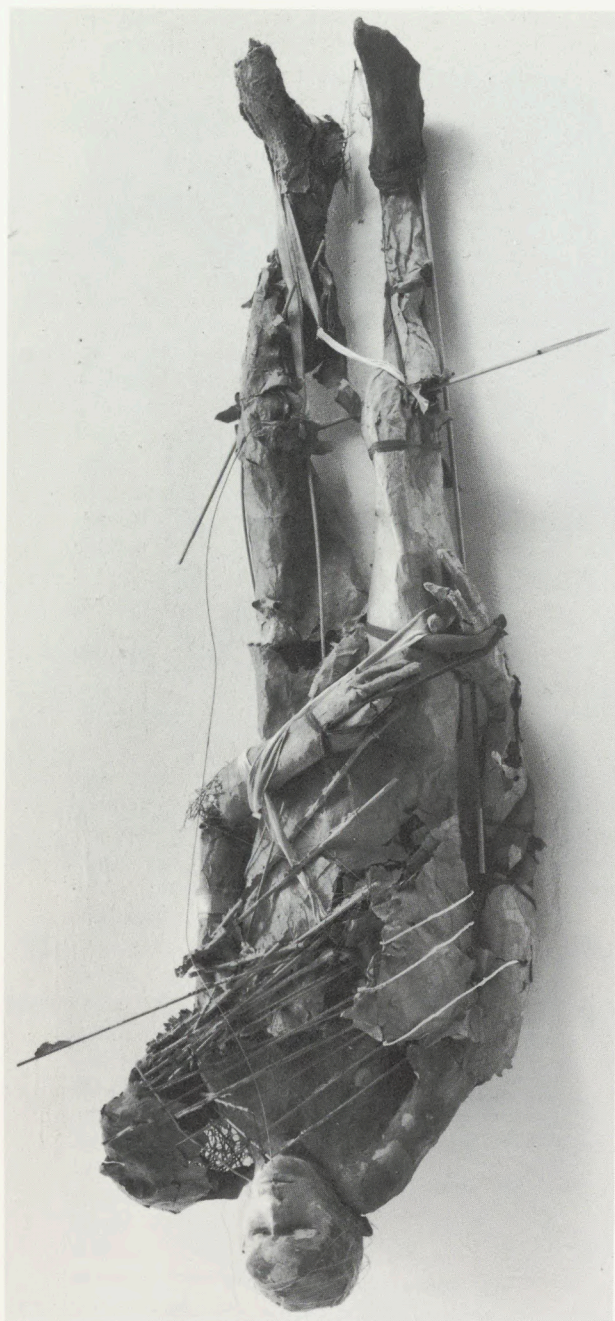
GW: Right. So when people react in a negative or a very frightened way, they are reacting to my feelings, they're not just reacting to my art. Suppose you were crying in the street and somebody went, "Oh, God, why are you crying? Why are you making that awful noise?" It would be a rather shattering experience. I know that I have to expect this, but when it happens it is upsetting. When I come up with some very frightening imagery, I am afraid of using it, but I do use it.

CL: Do you ever shock yourself with what you can create?

GW: No, I don't think so. Sometimes I am very happy with what I come up with—I amaze my-



89. Genna Watson
At Times. 1970
Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.



90. Genna Watson
Caddis. 1970 and 1978
 Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.

self that way—but I don't really shock myself. Usually when people are around the figures for a while, they cease reacting in that shocked manner.

CL: And then what do they do? Do they respond to the materials, the colors, the forms? I haven't lived with one, so I don't know. At this point, I am amazed by their beauty, but I am also shocked by the imagery. They are compelling pieces; I can't take my eyes off them.

GW: Some viewers don't react in a shocked and frightened way; that element doesn't seem to bother them at all. They just leap over that part.

CL: Was the Washington Project for the Arts your first solo exhibition?

GW: Yes, my first big solo show.

CL: Did it change anything for you? Was your production much greater after having the show because you felt much better about your work?

GW: Actually, shows have a habit of upsetting my concentration.

CL: Was it difficult for you to exhibit your pieces because you are private and they are so personal?

GW: I really loved it; I loved having my pieces out there, arranged. The opening though was difficult. I hated the questions, such as, "Are you always in such pain?" I thought to myself, "Oh, my God, doesn't this person ever have nightmares? How dare he ask me such personal questions!"

CL: Are the figures reflections of your nightmares?

GW: No, I don't think so. Actually, the figures are reflections of different elements: subconscious imagery; formal qualities relating to expressionism and abstraction; and combinations of various materials.

CL: Do you align yourself with the Surrealists?

GW: Not really. I think I have benefitted from Surrealism in that my imagery is derived from my subconscious. I do not feel that my pieces are removed from reality—in fact, they are closely connected to my emotional reality. I might add that my imagery does not come from dreams or hallucinations.

CL: When you put the pieces on display at the WPA, did you see them as environments?

GW: At this point, I don't need to create an environment. I want each figure to be viewed as an individual piece unto itself. I do not want the viewer to be physically surrounded; instead, I like them to be able to stand back from the work. I think someone's perspective of reality would be too altered if they had to go through an environment; they would be inundated.

CL: Was *At Times* the first time you had worked with two pieces—two figures for one piece?

GW: No, it wasn't. I used this concept the preceding year. Two identical figures—well, mere images, one which was clothed in white muslin with white clay hands and a white clay mask; the other black.

CL: Tell me about *At Times*. How did you come up with that idea?

GW: I was selling bikinis in Ocean City for a summer. I had just graduated and didn't know what I would do with myself. I sat down on this bench one day and started drawing an idea. It dealt with children's toys; specifically, a small horse similar to those made during the Victorian era. It was blown up into a huge horse with a black bicycle wheel in front and two wheels in back, and there was this poor guy on top with hands grasping him. The figure is dragging another image behind him, and the horse is running wild. It was a play on the idea of a sweet little horse that can never cause harm.

CL: How do you come up with your titles?

GW: Sometimes the titles come very easily; they seem to poetically suggest themselves. Other times I can't come up with a damn thing, and then something that seems to have no relationship to the piece will pop into mind and that's what I'll use.

CL: Do you always use the same face for your figures?

GW: No, not consciously.

CL: Are they made of clay?

GW: Yes, self-hardening clay. I usually throw in some Elmer's Glue to help.

CL: When did you decide to hang *Caddis* upside down, was that at the beginning? Or had you worked on the piece and then decided that it had to be this way?

GW: I began *Caddis* in 1970, right before I made *At Times*. In the initial imagery, it was hanging upside down. And when I reworked it, I didn't change that basic imagery, even though there was a lot about the piece that I did amend. Originally, *Caddis* consisted of fish hooks and a lot of lines holding it together, but I decided to break apart the figure and make it more of a shell. I also changed its face. I realize now that after my move to Washington, I became interested in making my figures more realistic. I did this by using soft features, eye lashes, hair, skin textures and a shape consistent with the human body. I wanted the pieces to resemble actual people.

CL: Because your works are so fragile, is it difficult to support them, to have them stand on their own? Do you think maybe that's why you have so many ropes, because the materials cannot stand the weight of the pieces?

GW: I'm sure if I wanted a piece to stand on the floor I could make it strong enough to do so. But sometimes I don't need that. I use the suspension element for support as well as for its visual effect.

CL: Do you have so many ideas that you write them down so that you can go back to them?

GW: Yes, I have a little folder full of them. Writing down my ideas and getting them drawn out gives me a bit of security. It keeps my hand in there when I can't do the work itself; it keeps me convinced that I'm an artist and that my ideas aren't going to dry up. So I try to sketch out the concepts every night.

CL: Tell me about when you moved to Washington and with whom you became friendly. Was it difficult to start up your work when you moved?

GW: It was horrible when we moved to Washington. We had to sell a lot of things in a garage sale. We had to give away our two dogs. John had a studio so we could store our belongings there, but we didn't have a place to live and my parents wouldn't let us stay with them. It was just a real nightmare, sleeping on a studio floor where it was hot and no jobs and not much money.

CL: Did you know anybody?



92. Genna Watson
Detail of *Somewhere in Between*. 1977-1978
Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.



94. Genna Watson
Persona/Visage; the Other Side of the Street. 1979
 Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.

GW: We knew a few people slightly. As I said, John knew Rockne and Sam. He had another friend here in town, Claudia Wilson, who let us stay with her until we found our own place.

CL: How long was it before you became comfortable enough to look for a studio?

GW: We found a place in Alexandria to live. I wasn't looking for a studio at the time, but Nade Haley, the artist, actually found a studio for us.

CL: Were you productive at that time, or was it too difficult to get back to work?

GW: As soon as we moved in, I started working on that piece I told you about. I had this figure and simply said, "Do anything you want with it, Genna." And I did. I got pretty much into it. It seemed like a good place for me to begin.

CL: Has it ever bothered you that the people around you weren't working with the figure?

GW: Oh, no, not at all. I think I got over that a long time ago. When I first started doing figures in undergraduate school, I was really scared; it was when the figure was no longer "in." And all these other students at the Institute were doing these crazy things in fiberglass, etc. One time this student, who was considered extremely avant-garde, came through as I was working on one of my figures, and he stopped and looked and finally said, "My God, that's really nice!" I think the recognition from people who weren't working with the figure, who said that my art was good, did a lot to help me feel secure.

CATALOGUE OF THE EXHIBITION

MICHAEL CLARK

1. *Coney Island Pier*. 1973
Oil on linen, 24 x 24"
Collection Barrett M. Linde
2. *Green George Washington*. 1973
Acrylic on linen, 24 x 24"
Collection Barrett M. Linde
3. *Lila*. 1973
Acrylic on linen, 29¾ x 24"
Collection Mary Swift
4. *Red-Grey-Blue*. 1973
Acrylic on linen, 24 x 24"
Courtesy Lunn Gallery/Graphics International Ltd., Washington, D.C.
5. *Light Blue George Washington*. 1974
Oil on canvas, 24 x 18"
Collection the artist
6. *Blue Coney Island*. 1976
Oil on linen, 36 x 36"
Collection the artist
7. *Los Angeles Window without Curtains*. 1976
Acrylic and oil on linen, 36 x 36"
Private collection
8. *Warehouse Window, Reade Street, New York City*. 1976
Acrylic and oil on linen, 30 x 36"
Courtesy Lunn Gallery/Graphics International Ltd., Washington, D.C.
9. *Lower East Side #1*. 1977
Acrylic and oil on linen, 26 x 32"
Collection the artist
10. *1938 Chevrolet*. 1977-1978
Oil on linen, 26 x 32"
Collection the artist
11. *Portrait of Pamela*. 1977-1978
Oil on linen, 20 x 28"
Collection the artist
12. *Classic Grisaille*. 1978
Acrylic and oil on linen, 48 x 48"
Courtesy Lunn Gallery/Graphics International Ltd., Washington, D.C.
13. *Corpus Christi Waterfront*. 1978
Acrylic on linen, 28 x 44"
Collection the artist

14. *Mulberry Street—Little Italy #III*. 1978
Acrylic and oil on linen, 17½ x 30½"
Collection the artist
15. *Project Window with Female Nude*. 1978
Acrylic and oil on linen, 48 x 48"
Collection the artist
16. *Seascape*. 1978
Oil on linen, 30 x 35"
Courtesy Lunn Gallery/Graphics International Ltd., Washington, D.C.
17. *Blue Nude*. 1979
Acrylic and oil on linen, 48 x 48"
Collection the artist
18. *1947 Cadillac*. 1979
Oil on linen, 26 x 32"
Collection the artist
19. *South Shoreline Drive—Corpus Christi*. 1979
Acrylic and oil on linen, 26 x 32"
Collection the artist
20. *Union Pacific Locomotive*. 1979
Oil on linen, 42 x 60"
Collection the artist

MANON CLEARY

21. *Twins*. 1974
Graphite on rag board, 60 x 40"
Collection Conrad Cafritz
22. *Self-Portrait with Shirley (Twins)*. 1975
Graphite on rag board, 40 x 36"
The Brooklyn Museum; Gift of Ramon Osuna
23. *Uncle Robby and the Rat*. 1976
Oil on canvas, 50 x 70"
Courtesy Osuna Gallery, Washington, D.C.
24. *Big J*. 1977
Oil on canvas, 60 x 84"
Collection Ramon Osuna
25. *Manon and Randy*. 1977
Graphite on rag board, 30 x 44"
Collection Robert Lennon
26. *Dorothy and Petur*. 1978
Graphite on rag board, 29½ x 23½"
Collection Rickie Orchin

27. *Self-Portrait with Randy V*. 1978
Graphite on rag board, 30 x 40"
Collection James M. Younger
28. *Self-Portrait with Hand Moving*. 1979
Graphite on rag board, 29½ x 23½"
Collection Drs. Margaret and Howard Baker, Philadelphia
29. *Self-Portrait*. 1979
Graphite on rag board, 29½ x 23½"
Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.;
Gift of The Women's Committee of the Corcoran Gallery of Art
30. *Self-Portrait*. 1979
Graphite on rag board, 29½ x 23½"
Courtesy Osuna Gallery, Washington, D.C.

JOAN DANZIGER

31. *Brindabella*. 1973
Mixed media, 55 x 34 x 27"
Collection Elise W. Hamilton
32. *Lady Abigail*. 1974
Mixed media, 32 x 39 x 19"
Collection Jean McDuffie Nowak
33. *Girl in a Star Dress*. 1977
Mixed media, 45 x 28 x 20"
Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.
34. *Lady Melinda*. 1977
Mixed media, 38 x 20 x 15"
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert H. Kinney
35. *Olivia Chance*. 1977
Mixed media, 63 x 32 x 23"
Courtesy Terry Dintenfass Gallery, New York City
36. *Megan—The Dream Lady*. 1978
Mixed media, 60 x 25 x 15"
Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.
37. *Otto Midford*. 1979
Mixed media, 31 x 31 x 23"
Collection Susan L. and Dixon M. Butler
38. *Reba—The Rhino Queen*. 1979
Mixed media, 30 x 22½ x 37"
Courtesy Terry Dintenfass Gallery, New York City

REBECCA DAVENPORT

39. *The Daughter-in-Law*. 1972
Oil on canvas, 66 x 52"
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Robert C. Davenport
40. *The Bar*. 1973
Oil on canvas, 59 x 90"
Collection Stanley Westreich
41. *The Sheriff*. 1973
Oil on canvas, 90 x 90"
Courtesy Luis Lastra Fine Arts, Ltd.,
Washington, D.C.
42. *Fred's Family*. 1974
Oil on canvas, 66 x 72"
Private collection
43. *Bicentennial*. 1975
Oil on canvas, 72 x 84"
Collection Charles and Donna Citrin
44. *Two Black Women*. 1975
Oil on canvas, 72 x 66"
Collection Dr. Philip Cohen
45. *Frantic Fran*. 1978
Oil on canvas, 96 x 72"
Courtesy Middendorf/Lane, Washington, D.C.

JENNIE LEA KNIGHT

46. *Farnley Bounce*. 1975
Acrylic on canvas, 19¾ x 32¼"
Collection Marcia E. Newell
47. *Liza*. 1975
Acrylic on canvas, 32½ x 23⅞"
Courtesy Diane Brown Gallery, Washington, D.C.
48. *Rufus*. 1975
Acrylic on canvas, 23 x 23"
Collection Jeene Neel DeVane
49. *Charles on the Studio Steps*. 1976
Acrylic on canvas, 20 x 30"
Courtesy Diane Brown Gallery, Washington, D.C.
50. *Claude II*. 1976
Oil on canvas, 26½ x 24½"
Courtesy Diane Brown Gallery, Washington, D.C.

51. *Sonny's Heifer—Winter Grass*. 1977
Oil on canvas, 27¼ x 30⅞"
Courtesy Diane Brown Gallery, Washington, D.C.
52. *Sonny's Young Bull*. 1978
Oil on canvas, 40⅜ x 30⅞"
Courtesy Diane Brown Gallery, Washington, D.C.
53. *Emly*. 1979
Oil on canvas, 20⅞ x 26⅞"
Courtesy Diane Brown Gallery, Washington, D.C.

KEVIN MACDONALD

54. *The Back Room*. 1975
Colored pencil and graphite on paper, 15 x 22"
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Davidov
55. *8th Grade Dance*. 1975
Colored pencil and graphite on paper,
22¾ x 29¾"
Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.;
Gift of The Women's Committee of the
Corcoran Gallery of Art
56. *Rise of the Full Moon*. 1975
Colored pencil and graphite on paper, 15 x 22"
Collection Mrs. Frances MacDonald
57. *The Booth*. 1976
Colored pencil and graphite on paper, 15 x 22"
Collection Mrs. Frances MacDonald
58. *Food for Thought*. 1976
Colored pencil and graphite on paper, 22 x 29¼"
Collection Guy H. McMichael III and Jane Pierson
McMichael, Washington, D.C.
59. *Metrobus*. 1976
Colored pencil and graphite on paper,
22½ x 29½"
Collection Dale and Frank Loy
60. *Mexican Cafe*. 1976
Colored pencil and graphite on paper, 22 x 29½"
Collection Robin Beth Davidov
61. *Morning Breeze*. 1976
Colored pencil and graphite on paper, 16 x 23"
Collection Louise Mann Madden
62. *Barnett Newman's Collage*. 1978
Colored pencil and graphite on paper, 15 x 22"
Collection Mrs. Frances MacDonald

63. *The Club*. 1978
Colored pencil and graphite on paper, 15 x 22"
Collection Mrs. Frances MacDonald
64. *New Orleans Hotel Room*. 1978
Colored pencil and graphite on paper, 15 x 22"
Collection Mrs. Frances MacDonald
65. *Radio On*. 1978
Colored pencil and graphite on paper, 16½ x 24"
Collection Alden Lowell Doud
66. *Rainy Day Cafe*. 1978
Colored pencil and graphite on paper, 22½ x 30"
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Murray Bring
67. *Philodendron*. 1979
Colored pencil and graphite on paper, 22½ x 30"
Collection Klaus D. Preilipper
68. *Six O'Clock in a Motel*. 1979
Colored pencil and graphite on paper, 22½ x 30"
Courtesy Lunn Gallery/Graphics International
Ltd., Washington, D.C.
69. *Staring*. 1979
Colored pencil and graphite on paper,
22¼ x 29¾"
Collection Joseph J. Chek

JOE SHANNON

70. *Pete's Beer*. 1970
Acrylic on canvas, 84 x 96"
Collection Institute of Policy Studies
71. *Reprimand*. 1970
Oil on canvas, 27 x 30"
Courtesy Gallery K, Washington, D.C.
72. *Shoe Salesman Presenting*. 1970
Oil on canvas, 29½ x 32"
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Samuel M. Greenbaum
73. *Cow Interview*. 1972
Acrylic on canvas, 47 x 44"
Collection Elinor Poindexter
74. *La Source*. 1972
Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 50"
Vincent Melzac Collection, Washington, D.C.
75. *Geleda #2*. 1974
Acrylic on canvas, 78 x 109"
Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.;
Gift of Elinor F. Poindexter

76. *12th Floor: The Kiss*. 1974
Acrylic on canvas, 38 x 31"
Collection Elinor Poindexter
77. *Hyattsville Suspension*. 1977
Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 48½"
Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;
Gift of Elinor Poindexter
78. *Aging Athlete with Donors*. 1979
Acrylic and oil on canvas, 56 x 50"
Courtesy Poindexter Gallery, New York City
79. *Magician II*. 1979
Acrylic and oil on canvas, 48 x 48"
Collection the artist

A. BROCKIE STEVENSON

80. *Fourth of July*. 1971
Acrylic on canvas, 37 x 60⅞"
National Collection of Fine Arts,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.;
Gift of The Woodward Foundation
81. *Hawker Hurricanes of 257 Squadron*. 1971-1972
Acrylic on canvas, 45 x 73"
Collection Gordon Wilson
82. *The Pennants*. 1972
Acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60"
Collection Pepper, Hamilton and Sheetz
83. *John Bird Company*. 1973
Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 96"
Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.
84. *The Cannery II*. 1974-1975
Acrylic on canvas, 30 x 114"
Collection Wilmer and Pickering
85. *O'Hara's II*. 1975
Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 48"
Private collection

86. *Freedman's*. 1977
Acrylic on canvas, 33 x 96"
Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.
87. *Yellow on Main Street*. 1978
Acrylic on canvas, 45 x 84"
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Roderick M. Hills,
Washington, D.C.
88. *Freedman's II*. 1979
Acrylic on canvas, 68 x 50"
Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.

GENNA WATSON

89. *At Times*. 1970
Mixed media, horse: 66 x 94½ x 32";
man: 15 x 82 x 21"
Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.
90. *Caddis*. 1970 and 1978
Mixed media, 80½ x 38 x 16½"
Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.
91. *Rose—Lily—Rose—She*. 1977
Mixed media, 30 x 20 x 45"
Private collection
92. *Somewhere in Between*. 1977-1978
Mixed media, 64½ x 17½ x 16"
Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.
93. *Tabletop Woman*. 1978-1979
Mixed media, 50 x 73 x 37"
Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.
94. *Persona/Visage; the Other Side of the Street*.
1979
Mixed media, 76 x 62 x 62"
Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.

COLOR PLATES



1847

1847



16. Michael Clark
Seascape. 1978
Courtesy Lunn Gallery/Graphics International Ltd.,
Washington, D.C.



24. Manon Cleary
Big J. 1977
Collection Ramon Osuna



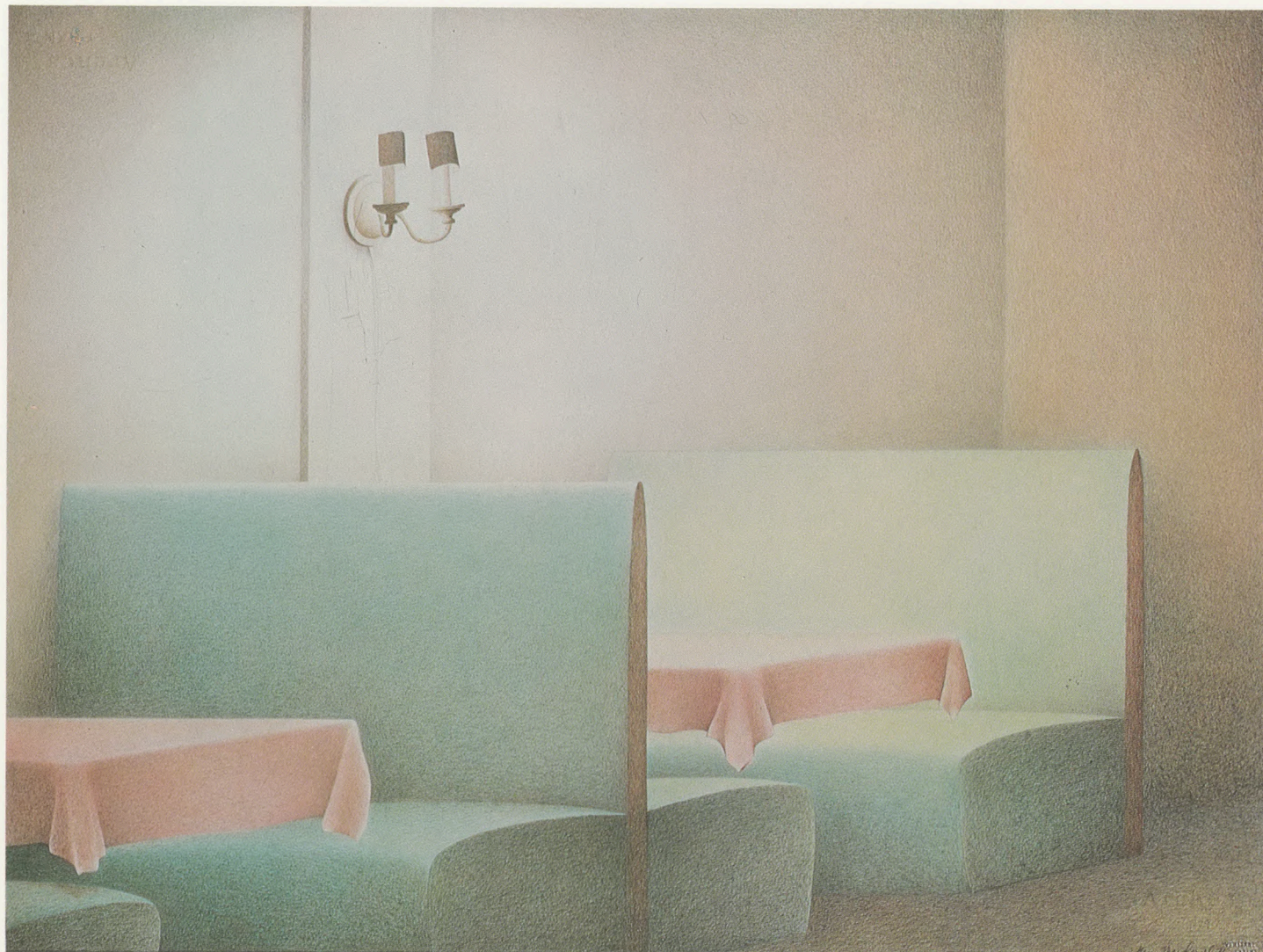
34. Joan Danziger
Lady Melinda. 1977
Collection Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert H. Kinney



40. Rebecca Davenport
The Bar. 1973
Collection Stanley Westreich

47. Jennie Lea Knight
Liza. 1975
Courtesy Diane Brown Gallery, Washington, D.C.

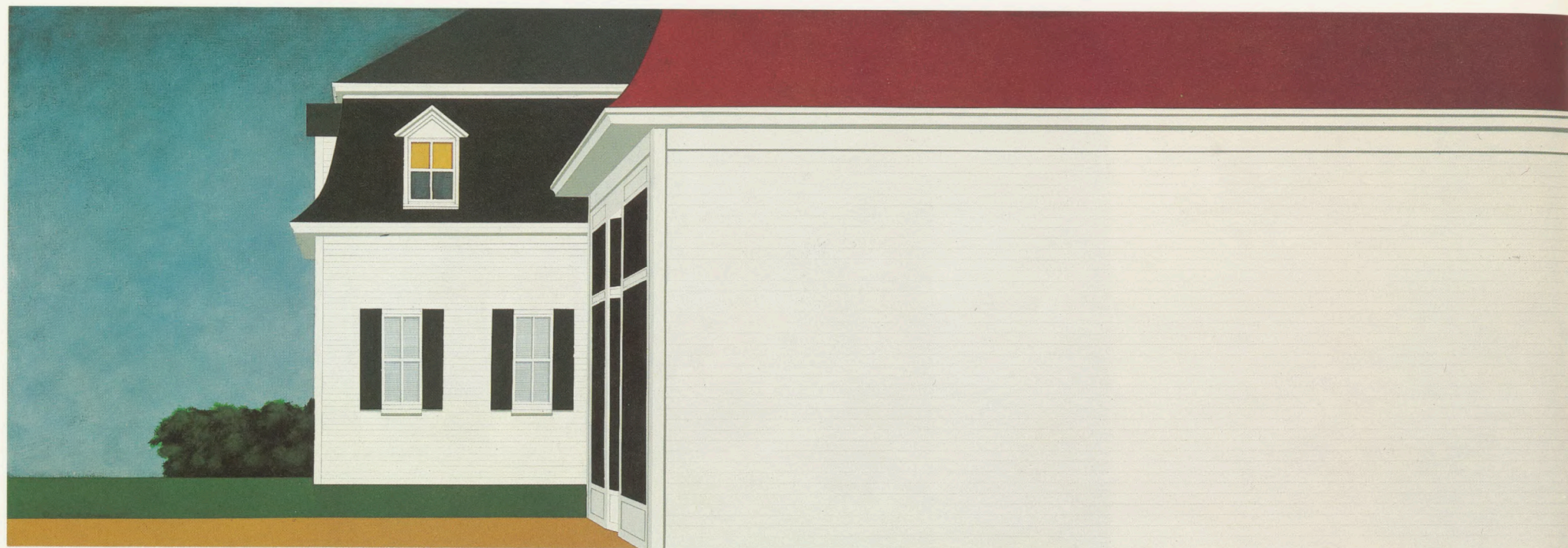




58. Kevin MacDonald
Food for Thought. 1976
Collection Guy H. McMichael III and Jane Pierson McMichael, Washington, D.C.



79. Joe Shannon
Magician II. 1979
Collection the artist



86. A. Brockie Stevenson
Freedman's. 1977
Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.

92. Genna Watson
Somewhere in Between. 1977-1978
Courtesy Fendrick Gallery, Washington, D.C.



All photographs by Joel Breger, except the following:

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Henry Beville, p. 70

Jack Meyer, p. 89

John Tennant, p. 63

Chad Evans Wyatt, pp. 71, 72, 94

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